

Thos. W. Jenkins -

cute Dec/56

look was on board the "Resolute"
in the time that she drifted a
and miles in the Arctic Sea.



Charles Lammam

From

Thos. W. Jenkins

'Resolute' Dec/56
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This book was on board the "Resolute"
during the time that she drifted a
thousand miles in the arctic sea.



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Beckwith, J. B.
A FAREWELL

TO MY

OLD SHIPMATES AND MESSMATES;

WITH SOME EXAMPLES,

And a few Hints of Advice.

BY THE

OLD QUARTER MASTER.

Farewell

*Messmates and Shipmates; this is a bond of brotherhood time itself cannot
sever; a yarn in the rope of friendship that will never part
while memory shall endure.*

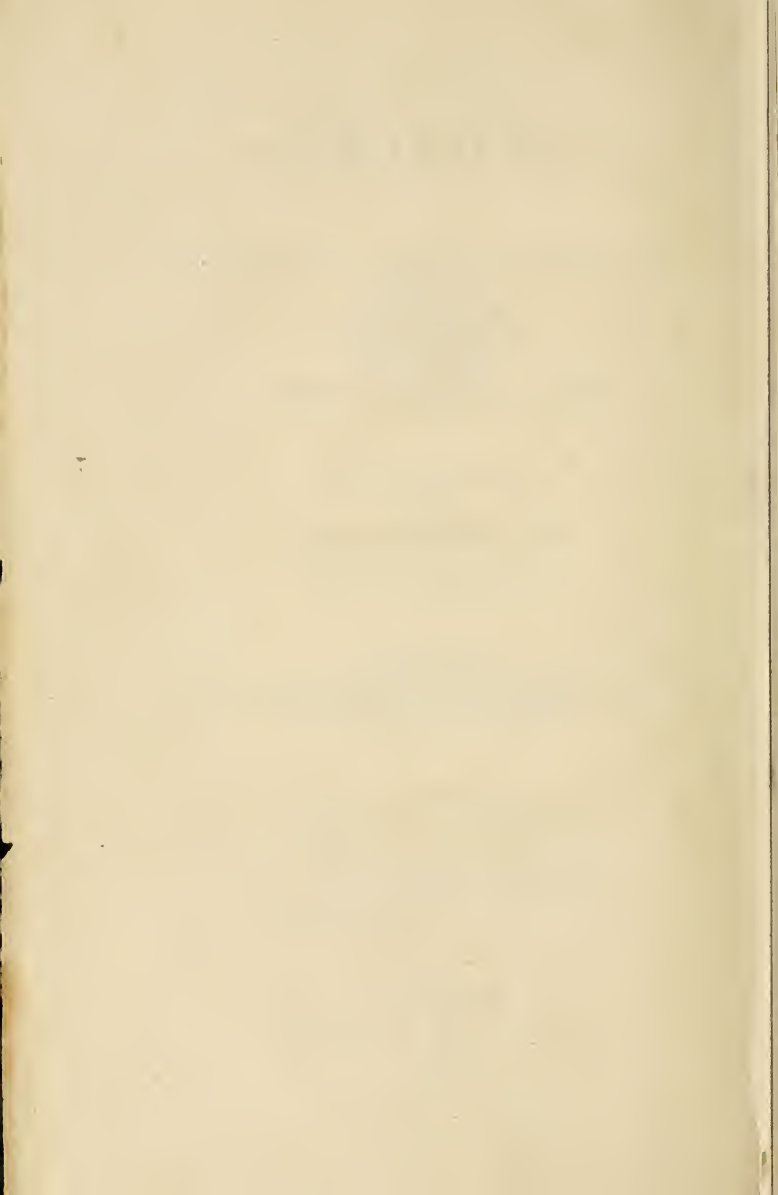
In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs—and God has given my share—
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return, and die at home at last.

Goldsmith's Traveller.

PORTSEA:

PRINTED BY W. WOODWARD.

1847.



TO
VICE ADMIRAL SIR WILLIAM PARKER, K.C.B.,
Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean, &c.

HONORED SIR,

Without pretension to anything but a strict adherence to truth, through your condescending permission I dedicate to you this little Book, which I publish, not without a hope that it will prove that among the Seamen of the British Navy there are some endowed with the best and warmest affections of our nature, and that they can respect and be grateful for the kindness and consideration of their superiors.

That an Officer so distinguished in the annals of our country by a splendid career of service—by a life devoted to her well-being and interest, and a kindly feeling to the British Tar, should permit me to dedicate this little volume to him, is highly flattering to me ; it will ever be considered by me as a proud event in my life. With the deepest sense of gratitude,

I remain,
Honored Sir,
Your faithful humble Servant,
JOHN BECHERVAISE,

Gunner, R.N.

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CHAPTER I.

“**Farewell**—Farewell—the voice you hear,
Has left its last rough tone with you ;
It ne’er will join the seaward cheer,
Or shout among the shouting crew.”

AMONG the varying scenes and events that occur in our career, there are few more unpleasant than bidding farewell to a body of men with whom we have spent the best, and the happiest years of our lives.

There is something in the sound of the word Farewell, that, even after a short period of acquaintance, causes the heart to sink. It seems to say, we part to meet no more. We branch off into different paths of life, and shall never again meet on earth.

But when the farewell is addressed to Messmates and Shipmates, rendered more dear by having shared with them the “Battle and the breeze,” the privations and trials incidental to a seafaring life—then the keen pang of the word Farewell, is indeed doubly felt.

Like the local attachment which almost every person imbibes for the place of his birth, or the home of his childhood, and the regard felt for those with whom he has been used to associate, the Seaman, in like manner, becomes

attached to the pretty little ship that has borne him far and wide over the bosom of the trackless ocean ; and still more warmly to the companions with whom he has, for many years, been connected by the ties of mutual service.

It has been remarked, by some writer, that a Seaman is an original being, possessing habits and manners essentially different from those of other classes of society. No doubt this marked character is occasioned by the very peculiar mode of life he is obliged to adopt ; a life so widely different from that of a landsman. Yet his feelings, in most instances, bear the stamp of Nature's kindest mould ; and I have ever found, that the plain blue jacket of a true British seaman (not a mongrel) covers a heart largely endowed with the warmest and best affections of our nature.

In the hurry of a visit to a ship of war in harbour, strangers see but a series of unknown faces ; men clad in the coarsest garb. But is this the reason why seamen should be regarded with indifference ? Many of those men, if we knew their histories, would perhaps claim our admiration by the ability, worth, and benevolence displayed in their path of life. Many would excite our warmest interest by the sufferings they have gone through meekly, and for the sake of others as well as themselves.

How many tales of weal and woe could be told of the Seamen of England, whom, in passing, we regard not ; undervalued as they are by landsmen in general. How many, as good as ourselves, repose upon them their warmest affections, and would not lose them for any earthly consideration. All those we see around us (and no doubt not one in the British fleet) but retains in his bosom the cherished recollections of happy days in a home he never forgets.

The various fortunes which we see every day befall the different members of the same family, after they part into their several paths of life, give to all a lesson, that it is not to every one that success in the career of existence is destined. And beside this, do not the arrangements of the sea at once necessitate the subjection of an immense number to humble toil, and throw in their way temptations in which weak and uninstructed man can scarcely help falling.

The history of England is the history of her Navy. It is to that, under the providence of God, that she stands before the world unrivalled; the asylum of oppressed freedom, the scourge of tyranny, and the emporium of commerce. It is through her seamen that she is at this moment, in every part of the world, enlarging the domains of religion and civilization. And well may we adopt the beautiful lines of the poet, and say—

“Far as the breeze can blow the billow’s foam,
Behold our empire, and survey our home.”

The Bar, the Church, the Army, and the higher branches of the Naval department, have all spread volumes of their secret history before the public gaze; while the seafaring man of the lower class has, with scarcely one exception, been a sealed book; or if ever entered upon, it has been by shore-going writers, who know nothing of the true principles of the seaman.

In a lengthened service of nearly half a century—the greatest part of which has been spent among that class of men whose manners and actions I have, in a former work, endeavoured to describe, as well as now to give them the parting advice of an aged friend—I have found that the character of the seaman contained a far greater proportion of good than of evil.

And surely it will need no apology on my part for handing down to the rising generation of seamen such good actions only as have come under my immediate notice, and thus lay before them examples they will do well to imitate.

What instances of noble, though unostentatious heroism—of calm and patient fortitude under the most intolerable anguish that can wring the heart, or torture the body, have I not witnessed.

What diversified manifestations of character, what singular and touching passages of history have come under my eye while on a ship's lower deck, with six or seven hundred men around me. Circumstances to which men of superior rank must be strangers, to me were sources of delight, and beguiled many a painful hour. And while Jack sat in his mess, relating the various incidents of his life, he little dreamt that I, who appeared inattentive, was carefully culling materials for these pages.

A noble instance of daring courage is well worthy of the first place in these pages. It took place in the year 1819, in the Mediterranean. The islands had been for many years infested with vessels which went armed, and well manned, plundering any merchant-craft they met with, and frequently landed, and laid the small villages under contribution for provisions and other necessities; and from their intimate acquaintance with the creeks and bays, escaped capture, by venturing into places where our cruisers could not follow. And if so far in danger, rather than be captured, ran their vessels ashore; and in some cases, stove them, to prevent their being got off.

So many complaints had been made to the French and English naval authorities, that several vessels of light draft of water, were sent in search of these Pirates. Some of

these were merchant-vessels, well manned and armed, from the ships of the squadron. In one of these, I (then a Petty-officer of the flag-ship) was sent, accompanied by ten men; and the whole under the command of what was, in those days, a master's mate; and, with the crew of the vessel, amounted to nineteen men and two boys.

Among the men sent with me from the flag-ship, was one named Stanley; a carpenter by trade, a Hanoverian by birth. Nothing annoyed Stanley so much as to call him a foreigner. Indeed, it was only in a long conversation that it could be ascertained that he was not quite English.

Our orders were to look out carefully for a Greek schooner, which was said to have done more mischief to the trade than all the rest. For a week all our efforts were unavailing. At last, one morning, just as the sun peeped above the horizon, the vessel we had been so diligently seeking for, appeared about three points on the lee-bow; but so completely embayed, that it was impossible for her to weather the land on either side; there was no alternative; she must either go ashore, or surrender at discretion, for she was too well known to be doubted.

Of two desperate evils, she chose the least, and bore up dead before the wind, set her squaresail, and ran ashore in a sandy bay, and with such force, that no hope remained of getting her afloat again. As soon as the vessel struck, the crew hauled their boat up, and putting their chests and bags into her, landed on the beach, apparently without any hurry. In a few minutes our boats were alongside, and the men jumping on board as fast as they could. During this time, however, several muskets were fired at us, and one man was slightly wounded in the wrist.

Next to the officer in command, Stanley and myself were the first upon her deck. I observed Stanley take a hurried

glance fore and aft, and aloft, as if he feared the spars would come down about his ears, and then rushed down into her cabin. His motive was uncertain; but the officer followed just in time to see, what to many others would have caused a precipitate retreat. But with Stanley it had acted otherwise. On the middle of the cabin deck stood a barrel of loose powder, with a lighted candle stuck in the midst of it. One spark—one fatal spark, would have hurried every soul into eternity. I shudder at the thought. At the moment the officer stepped down the ladder, Stanley, gently skimming the powder with the back of his hand, took the candle between the third and fourth finger, and having very gently lifted it out, put it into his mouth, and closed his lips firmly.

The officer who, in a state of the greatest excitement, had been looking on, and afraid to utter a word, now exclaimed, "By George, Stanley, you're a noble fellow." Now pitch the barrel, powder and all, overboard; and let us disable the craft before these fellows return, and get her afloat for fresh acts of villany. She was soon rendered unserviceable; and we returned to our brig, and thence, in a few days, to our own ship; when the story being related to the captain and officers, gained Stanley some dollars, a little leave, and a great deal of credit.

In the course of time it became a bye-word among the ship's company, to ask Stanley, when he least expected the question—"Stanley, where did you put the candle?" To which he invariably replied, "Poot en in mine mout." He continued a great favourite with both officers and men, until the ship was paid off, and I saw him no more for years; when we again met on a discovery-voyage. But he was then getting old, and beyond service. On his return from this, his last and most arduous voyage, his face and

person exhibited extreme old age; but his manners were much improved. He attentively read his Bible; and was at first laughed at; but his uniform conduct, and rigid attention to duty, conquered all. I never knew a man in his station of life, more respected. On his return, he was entitled to a liberal pension, but preferred Greenwich Hospital, for its quiet and retirement. He did not long survive, but when he died, his death was that of a man fully prepared for the awful change.

It is beyond a doubt, that his presence of mind, under Providence, was the means of saving thirteen lives; the slightest tremor would have caused immediate explosion, and hurried us, unprepared, to destruction. This is one instance of daring not very often met with.

There occurred in the same ship, (the *Blossom*), an instance of that affection and kindness, which is often to be found between two seamen, and which is worthy of record.

At the commencement of the outfit, two seamen came to enter; one was rather slight for the standard the Captain had laid down for his ship's company, but one would not go, unless the other was taken: in consequence of which, both their names were put on the ship's books. One was named Robert Moore, the other was called Loyd, (I think John,) but it matters not, for he was always known by the name of Paddy; you might sing out for Loyd till your lungs ached, and get no reply, but just hail, Paddy Loyd, and the "Here I am" was sure to follow. The two men, although of different countries, had commenced their seafaring career at the same time, and both joined the same ship as boys of the second class. Both had got on nearly equal, through the various grades up to A. B., a rate so much desired by youths just entering the service. They were exactly as

brothers ought to be, there was between them one common chest, one common purse, neither of them was ever heard to say, *my* chest, or *my* purse, it was always, the chest, the bag, or the purse, and as they were steady men, the purse was never empty. Their grogs, (and this was no common occurrence) were always put into the same basin, and drank together, if present ; but if absent, the absent always came off with the best share. During the whole time they were together they were never known to quarrel, although exposed to privations, seldom met with, except in a Discovery Ship. And even after the death of Moore, I seldom, or ever heard Loyd mention his name without saying, Poor Bob, he did so-and-so, or he said so-and-so, and run his arm across his eye, to dry the tear that invariably followed the observation.

Who shall pretend to know the heart of man, or pry into the mysteries of the human mind. But surely in my humble opinion, Loyd's attachment to Moore was pure and not often equalled. Poor Moore,

" Beneath a foreign soil he sleeps,
His dauntless breast now burns no more."

While the *Blossom* was lying at Whahoo, every indulgence that could possibly be allowed was given to officers and men ; the sick were landed, and sent to a temporary hospital, and liberty given to one watch at a time. It was during our stay here also, that a large bag of letters from England reached the ship. The anxiety we had all felt for our dear families at home was, with some relieved, with others increased. With poor Moore it was agony. His letter contained the painful intelligence of the death of his beloved wife ; an amiable and very respectable girl, married only a few weeks previous to our departure. She

had died in child-bed, leaving him a distressed widower, with a helpless babe ; left in the world without a father's or mother's fostering care.

How often it occurs in our career of life, that when we find our sorrows too heavy, we fly for relief, to the very thing we ought to avoid, namely, the bottle. Would we but for one moment consider the folly of deadening, even for a short period, a pain that returns with double force, and can only again be softened by the same remedy, until drink becomes almost necessary to our existence, we should pause, ere from its constant indulgence we became habitual drunkards.

This was not exactly the case with Moore ; but he gave way to drink, and made use of some villainous compound, called rum, made on the islands ; which some months afterwards caused his death.

After leaving the Sandwich Islands, Moore still continued to do his duty ; but it was evident to all hands that he was very ill. Shortly after our entry into Behring's Straits, he was obliged to give up ; the surgeon giving not the slightest hope of his recovery.

It was then that the kind attentions of friendship became necessary to soothe the dying pillow. And it was then that it was displayed in its full power. Loyd watched over him as over a brother, with the tenderest care. His attention was unremitting. But the hour was fast approaching when they must part— and for ever !

The ship was then sailing upwards in Behring's Straits ; and although the sun did not set more than forty minutes out of twenty-four hours, yet the cold was intense. Well do I remember, only a night or two before Moore breathed his last, he expressed a desire that some one should read

the Bible to him. Licut. Wainwright had the first watch; permission was soon given, and myself selected to go, and I continued it, at least once a day, until he was no more.

His last scene was fast approaching. It was about 8.30 in the first watch, that a change for the worse took place; but although the body was rapidly sinking, the mind seemed stayed upon his God. The only anxiety he seemed to feel was about his child. The Captain had not only frequently gone to his cot, but had ordered anything that was necessary to be freely given from his stores.

Only a few minutes before his death, all his energies seemed to revive. Fresh strength appeared. The eye brightened. For a few moments he appeared himself again; but it was only the last flickering of the lamp; the soul, as it were, bidding an eternal adieu to its earthly tenement, and standing on the verge of eternity. With one convulsive effort he attempted to sit up in his cot, and clasping his hands together, he feebly exclaimed "Who, oh, who, will take care of my child?"

Loyd who was standing at the foot of his cot, came forward, and taking the hand of his dying friend, said, "Bob, she shall never want while Jack Loyd's got a shilling to give her, so help me —" The half-accomplished vow was checked; the man was no more; he was gone.

It was under the half-deck, with only a canvas screen around him, that all this took place, and tended naturally to impress the minds of those present with serious thoughts. For, short of all kinds of provisions, on less than half the usual allowance; labour arduous; cold intense: it powerfully said to all, your turn may be next.

Scenes like these will act on the most hardened for the time being at least; for then, the mind of man wandering to

and fro, in search of something to dwell upon, at last fixes itself upon its benevolent Maker; and in some instances, feelings arise that act powerfully upon our future life.

Let us now see how Loyd kept the solemn obligation he had thus entered into. It may by some be supposed, that on his return from a voyage seldom equalled, he forgot, in the excitement of pleasure, a promise made to his dying friend; but no, he never for a moment lost sight of it. On his return to England, he had a good sum of money to receive, for he left no half-pay. His first care was to visit the little *protege*, thus, as it were, cast into his arms; removed her from those with whom she had been placed at the death of her mother, placed her with his own mother, put twenty pounds into the bank for her, clothed her well; and then, as he told me, the old woman (meaning his mother) and himself, should enjoy the rest; and when that was gone, why, he would go to sea for more.

Now, I would here observe, that Loyd's was a bad system; "spend the money first, and then seek a ship," places a seaman in a very awkward situation. Suppose for instance, brother, that you cannot for a time get a ship, or even if a ship is to be got, the rate you want is filled up. In this case, you must thankfully take a ship you dislike, a captain and officer you never saw, and probably, be uncomfortable for a whole station; when by acting with a little judgment at first paying off, you might have secured all you have now lost, and left no painful reflections behind.

Now, from the first day of my joining a ship of war until the present hour, my name has only been off a ship's books thirty-seven days. My plan of acting was as follows. While the ship was clearing out, I kept a bright look out

for another which was fitting out: probably some of the officers of my present ship were likely to be appointed to the other; in that case I followed them. If it was otherwise, I got a recommendation from one Captain to the other; and thus, as it were, became a sort of timber-head of each ship. Once on her books, I was secure of employment; my pay was going on; my pound and pint forthcoming, and no servitude lost. Whatever liberty circumstances admitted of, a portion I employed in refitting my stock of clothes, and preparing for another station, and the remainder I spent in the bosom of my loved family.

Since the late excellent regulations of Pensions have come up, it behoves every seaman, not only to serve his twenty-one years with as little loss of time as possible, but to have as much Petty Officers' time as can be got, in order to obtain the medal and gratuity money.

But to go on: for some years I lost sight of Loyd, and every enquiry I could make was unsuccessful, but walking in Portsmouth about Christmas, 1842, I was surprised at being addressed by a fine good-looking old tar, with, "How do you do, Sir, no doubt you've forgot me, but you and I sailed together in the *Blossom*; my name is Loyd, and here," said he, "pointing to a very decent young woman," is poor Bob's daughter." Even at this length of time, the friend of his youth was not forgotten; for as he spoke his name, I observed the rising tear in his eye. Gladly would I have spent a few hours with an old shipmate that I really respected, but my time was not my own; I was on duty. I however learnt with pleasure, that two years before, he had obtained a medal, and fifteen pounds for long service and good conduct, and what (to a man of his rank) was a good pension. This, with some little jobs he was able to pick

up, enabled him to live comfortably, and bid fair to end his days in comfort.

In my short conversation with Loyd, there was one thing which struck me most powerfully as tending to insure the comfort of his future life; he never drank any thing stronger than tea or coffee. Like me, he had noticed the baneful effects of drink; he had fought with it and conquered, and for years he had been a stranger to the taste of ardent spirits. The consequence, even in this man was evident; he was the picture of healthy age, and bade fair for a long life.

From many such circumstances, it appears to me, that friendship among seamen (true seamen) is more powerful, more lasting, than among any other class of men; and the reason is obvious. A man goes on board a ship of war, remains there, not less, but perhaps much more than three years; sees scarcely any other faces than those of his shipmates and messmates, with most of whom he must be in habits of intimacy. It is pleasing to catch a sight of two men who once were messmates or shipmates, and who, after a long separation, meet on shore. Observe the grasp of each other's hand; the delight that glows on their countenances as each looks at the other, and marks the change made by the encroachments of time, which warns him that in his face too are the marks of increasing years. Suppose one to have just returned from abroad; hark, how he says to the other, "I've got so and so in my bag (Tom or Jack) I'll give you."

Fancy, for a moment, that one of them has no money, the other has but little, and that little is carefully knotted in the corner of his neckerchief: observe how perseveringly his friend tugs at the knot with both teeth and fingers, to share or treat the man with whom he has, in years gone by,

shared the arduous duties of a seafaring life. A public-house almost invariably follows the meeting, which most probably is prolonged till one or both are intoxicated ; and the latter part is the worse part of all. I have frequently stood with delight and witnessed such a meeting ; and although the end is painful, yet the motives are pure, and from the heart.

CHAPTER II.

Needs there a better example than that of my worthy old shipmate, described in the former chapter. Needs there a more powerful inducement to seamen to follow a correct path of duty, than that of John Loyd, and hundreds of others who are this day enjoying, in peaceful retirement, the fruits of their labours.

Only a few doors from my late dwelling lives an old Pensioner, a regular old tar, who adds to his pension by doing a very few little jobs ; and whose voice is heard about the neighbourhood, singing away, loud and strong. And I frequently think, that while thus singing, he fancies himself on the forecastle, of which he was the captain, surrounded by his usual flock of listeners. I often stop on hearing his voice, with his favourite song, which is as follows :

“ All hands unmoor, unmoor ;
Hark to the hoarse but welcome sound,
Startling the seaman’s sweetest slumbers ;
The groaning capstan’s labouring round—
The cheerful life’s enlivening numbers,
And lingering idlers join the brawl,
And merry ship-boys swell the call—
All hands unmoor, unmoor.”

The cry's, a sail ! a sail !
Brace high each nerve to dare the fight,
And boldly steer to seek the foeman ;
One secret prayer to aid the right,
And many a secret thought to woman :
Now spread the fluttering canvas wide,
And dash the foaming sea aside—
The cry's, a sail ! a sail !

Three cheers for victory !
Hush'd be each plaint o'er fallen brave,
Still ev'ry sigh to messmate given ;
The seaman's tomb is in the wave,
The hero's latest hope is heaven.
High lift the voice in revelry ;
Gay raise the song, the shout, the glee—
Three cheers for victory."

These lines were sung with what I thought exquisite taste, and brought to my mind a certain secret tie that binds the seaman to his ship ; and which leads him to prize her qualities as one would esteem the virtues of a friend.

Other men may have their different inanimate subjects of admiration, but none of their feelings so thoroughly enter into the composition of their being, as the affection which an old seaman feels for his ship. It is home, his theme of constant, and frequently of painful interest ; his source of pride and exultation, as she gratifies or disappoints his high-wrought expectations in speed or in fight ; a character for good or luckless qualities is earned, and in some way, many instances her very worse qualities render her dear to him.

The vast improvement which commenced in the navy in 1824, and which has yearly increased since, points out to the seaman, in forcible characters, the comforts of a ship of war ; cleanliness, regularity, and not one-third of the drunk-

eness which took place in years gone by, when a greater allowance of spirits was issued. These comforts are only during the period of service. Now let the seaman look to old age, when toil and service shall have made him unfit for active exertion; 'tis at that period that his wants crowd upon him; 'tis at that period that he needs the aid of his country; 'tis then that a liberal pension becomes acceptable; or that monument of national honor, Greenwich Hospital, where the old tar can doze away the latter years of his once active life, well nursed and cared for. Some there are, who before half their period of service expires, bring on disorders and premature old age, by excess of all kinds, and not having sufficient time to claim a pension, are admitted there as an act of charity; and even then continue to spread discontent around them. One instance struck me forcibly.

Late in 1842, I went to Greenwich on business of my own (business did I say?) it was to place my youngest boy in the upper school of that benevolent institution. After my little fellow was examined, having nearly two hours to spare, I took a walk round the College to look for some old shipmate or messmate under the three-square hat. I was not long before I heard my name mentioned, and was accosted by a man who had once belonged to the *Excellent*. Very nearly his first address was a request for a little *baccy*, and a drop of gin. This man was one of those persons described above, who all his life had been a most inveterate drunkard, and now stood before me a decrepid old man at forty; shaking from head to foot, walking feebly with a stick, and sight nearly gone. Of every ten words spoken by him, one at least was an oath of discontent. Glad to get rid of him, I gave him some tobacco; but gin, or money to buy it, never; and then went in search of some

more worthy shipmate. Nor was I disappointed in meeting with a venerable old man whose silvered hairs proclaimed his lengthened years. He first spoke to me, and calling me by name, asked me if I did not recollect John Hickey, my old messmate in the *Rochfort*. I did recollect him well. After a most friendly shake of the hand he took me to his cabin, and seated on his bed, I took a good view of the place. It was about seven feet square, and cleanliness itself. The crockery was laid out in the best order, and in fact, everything around me put me in mind of the gunner's store-room of the *Rochfort*, of which he was yeoman ; it was neatness itself. I said, "Well, old boy, you appear very comfortable here ; how long have you had this cabin so well fitted up."

"Aye, aye, Mr. B.," replied the old man, comfortable enough ; any man in the College may be so if he likes. Why you see, when we were paid off from the *Rochfort*, in 1824, I had neither friends nor relations ; and my only acquaintances were publicans and girls, who first helped me to throw away my money, and then hove me out of the window. For some weeks I was in great distress. Peace was reigning ; and men in youth and health were taken, while the old were refused ; for every captain wanted a smart ship's company."

"After suffering very great hardships, I one day saw our late Captain, Schomberg : he recollected me, and stopping said, 'Where did you and I sail together, my man ?'"

"In the *Rochfort*, Sir," I replied. 'Well,' continued the captain, "Can I do anything to serve you ?"

"I related the circumstances in which I was placed, when Captain S., giving me a sovereign, desired me to be opposite the Admiralty the next morning, and thus left me. Thankful indeed I was, for I had not had a good dinner for many a day ; I however had one then."

“At the hour appointed I stood before the gate, keeping both eyes open to look out for him on whom I thought depended my all. My anxious watching was soon over. He appeared, and told me to follow him. I went in. A short conversation followed, which ended in my being sent here. The captain gave me some silver, and I left him with a heart filled with gratitude, came here, was victualled, and here, Mr. B., I’ve been ever since; and here” (said the old man) “I will, please God, remain, until I sink into the grave. But now you’ll taste my beer, and then we’ll go and see some more old shipmates.” I did so, and then walked into some of the other wards, where, it seemed to me, that everybody was acquainted with me, for the old boys flocked about me, some who did, and some who did not know me. It was now the dinner time. An old friend who, I think, was boatswain of one of the dining halls, took me in with him, and gave me a view of (I should say) considerably above one hundred of the old boys who, after sharing in every clime the heat, the cold, the “Battle and the breeze,” now sat undisturbed and comfortable in their old age, clean, and well clothed. It was indeed a scene worthy to look upon. But I was wishing to point out to my brother seamen the misfortunes caused by giving way to excessive drinking, and lay before them a very few of the fatal examples that have passed before me in my career of life. It frequently happens that the drunkard not only endangers his own life, but probably sacrifices the lives of others of far more value to society.

In the year 1832, while cruising off the Tagus, in the *Asia*, it was one part of the routine of ship’s duty to beat to quarters at 4.30 *p. m.* She was like a clock; everything was regularity itself. No man could be at a loss what to do, or at what time to do it. As soon as the “Retreat”

was beat, "Hands shorten sail" was sure to follow ; and unless making a passage, the ship was made snug for the night.

One Sunday evening, the drum had beat as usual, and the retreat was to follow in a few minutes, when I observed a man named Torey, captain of the foretop, standing under the half deck, ready to spring upwards at the first flourish of the boatswain's whistle. One glance convinced me that Peter Torey had been cook that day ; or in other words, that he was by far too much intoxicated to go to the earing with safety. A few words with him confirmed my suspicions. I begged him not to go aloft ; and promised that the second captain of the top should take his place. But, alas ! my words were unheeded. Poor fellow ! at the "Pipe hands shorten sail," he almost flew up the fore rigging ; it seemed to me that his feet scarcely touched the ratlines. Before the order, "Lower away topsails," was given, he was ready to spring on the yard. Indeed he was standing on it before it was secured, and walking outward towards the yard-arm ; but he walked too far ; in his blind haste to be first he walked clean over the yard-arm, struck the fore-chains, and passed aft a corpse. Nor was this all ; a mate named Bett or Brett, jumped overboard after him, and very nearly lost his life before he could be got inboard again. I heard his last piercing cry, and was the last person to whom he had spoken on earth. It operated powerfully on my mind, and it was a long time before I could overcome it.

Death is at all times solemn ; but never so much so as at a moment like this. A man dies ashore ; his friends, his wife, his children, watch his latter days, and cheer the bed of death. The man of God too, attends him, and his last hours are frequently spent in prayer and praise. His

family follow him to the grave, and a stone, or a mound of earth marks the spot where his remains are deposited.

But when a fellow creature falls overboard, and is seen no more, there is a suddenness in the event, and a difficulty in realising it, which gives it an air of awful mystery. He was at your side; you heard his voice; that voice so well known; and in an instant he was gone. Nothing but vacancy remains. There is one less at the mess-table; one less to take the wheel; one less to lay out upon the yard; in fact, one less everywhere. You miss him, for habit has almost made him necessary to you.

All these things tend to make such a death particularly solemn. The oath of the swearer, and the voice of the noisy, are for a time silenced. The officers are more quiet than usual; the men go aloft more carefully; the departed man is seldom named without the addition of "Poor fellow, I hope he's better off."

But is it so; is he better off? is a question of much importance. Has his past life led us to hope that he is indeed better off. I would judge charitably; but alas, in this case, I fear there was little prospect. I have sailed with seamen whose whole conduct gave an almost certain assurance that, in whatever shape death appeared, it would be met without fear, and prove a door to happiness.

It is supposed by most people at sea, that a life of religious duty would tend to injure the abilities of seamen, and lower them in the esteem of their shipmates. In answer to this, I beg leave to quote a few lines from one of the most enterprising navigators of the age; an officer whose uniform care and attention to the comforts of his men, during three arduous voyages to the Arctic regions, merits their warmest gratitude; I mean Capt. Sir Edward Parry. He writes as follows:—"I have had the honour, I may say

the happiness, of commanding British seamen under circumstances requiring the utmost activity, implicit and immediate obedience, and the most rigid attention to discipline and good order, and I am sure that the maintenance of all these was in a great measure owing to the blessing of God upon our humble endeavours to improve the moral and religious character of our men."

The friends of religion will feel a pleasure in having the fact announced, that the very best men in the ship were those possessing dispositions and sentiments eminently Christian.

At a meeting of the Naval and Military Society, held in 1818, at which his royal highness the Duke of York presided, Sir James Saumarez, then an Admiral, stated that he had uniformly found that the best, and the bravest seamen, were those who habitually read their Bibles.

I have, in the course of my seafaring career, seen many instances of officers and men who, in the service due to their country, never forgot the service due to their God; and these, after having patiently endured the jeers and taunts of messmates and shipmates, have, from their uniform conduct and rigid integrity, become not only comfortable in the ship, but looked up to as examples worthy of imitation.

I recollect one particular instance of a man in the *Rockfort*, whose name I have forgotten, but which matters not. He was a regular old seaman, who had sailed in nearly every climate, and shared many hardships. He was one of the steadiest men in the ship; was never heard to utter an oath, particularly sober, and from his general conduct and manner (for he was never without his Bible), was called the Parson.

For some months this man experienced from a portion of the ship's company, every annoyance that could be

given; but after a time his exemplary conduct overcame all; and at last he became so much respected by the very men who had been most troublesome to him, that in many instances the greatest drunkards in the ship gave way to his opinions; and he frequently restored peace where fightings, and consequent punishment, would have followed.

This man, with some others, were sent for a few months into one of the tenders. I was the petty officer sent. Only a few nights after leaving Malta for Gibraltar, it came on to blow a regular gale: the weather, which before had been mild, was in a short period changed; the atmosphere became dense and suffocating, while the distant thunder, as it rolled along the arch of heaven, seemed to say, prepare for a night of danger. Such was the state of the weather, that I could not have slept for worlds. It was impossible to gaze upon the scene around us without feelings of awe. The dark sky in the verge of the horizon to windward, rendered more black by the declining sun hovering over the thickening clouds, through which his radiance could not penetrate. At intervals, heaven's artillery flamed through the gloom, and heralded those awful sounds which none can hear and remain unconcerned and unappalled. The mighty thunder came upon the ear like the voice of the Almighty proclaiming his dominion and power as the Creator of all.

At this time, the man whom I have been describing, was at the tiller; I fixed my eyes on him as I held on by the weather bulwarks, for the sea was frequently making clean breaches over our frail little vessel, leaving her almost too oppressed to rise over the waves. A ray of light was reflected from the binnacle on his countenance, which expressed the humblest confidence. It appeared to me to say—I fear no danger, for my hope is above. And yet

men like these are often regarded as if they were of no consideration in the muster-roll of mankind.

I would, ere I quit the subject of drunkenness, lay before my brother seamen a few more examples of its fatal effects, especially in a ship of war. And were this book written from beginning to end on this painful subject, it would not contain one-tenth part of the misfortunes I have observed caused by giving way to excessive drinking.

"How affecting, how appalling," says Mr. Woodruff, the secretary to the Seamen's Society, at Shields, "that of every sixteen men who had died within the last ten years, eleven were by drowning or shipwreck; and of these eleven, five were caused by intoxication."

An instance of this kind that occurred on board the *Melville*, while laying at the Western Islands, in 1836, now strikes me most forcibly. The unfortunate young man's name has escaped my memory; but the circumstance must remain fresh in the recollection of all who were on board.

The youth in question belonged to one of the cutters. He was anything but an habitual drunkard; steady, attentive, and during his short stay in the ship, much respected. But by one rash act he sacrificed his life, and left a respectable family to weep over his untimely fate.

About 10 *a.m.*, the cutter had been sent ashore for wardroom sea-stock. The midshipman of the boat had orders to keep the men in her; a bad system, for then men will stray in spite of every restriction. The boat being delayed longer than was expected, first one and then another of the crew had gone up on such pretences as the midshipman of the boat could not well refuse. At last the midshipman left also to seek his men; but by this time they were enjoying themselves in a wine-shop.

The weather being exceedingly hot, the men drank freely of the sweet wine of the country. All had money, for the

advance had only been paid a few days before sailing from England. Bottle after bottle was called for, till at last one of the most intoxicated offered a small wager that no man present would drink a pint of aquadent in five minutes. Poor — accepted the wager, and in a state of great excitement called for the aquadent, hastily took the mug that held it from the hands of the wretch who supplied it, and with trembling hands raised it to his lips, and swallowed the contents. Only a few minutes elapsed before his head dropped slowly on the table, and so remained. I had been sent by the captain to purchase some things he was in want of, and passing that way, was told by one of the natives of the circumstance. I rushed into the house, and endeavoured to arouse him; threw cold water over him, and rubbed his temples with vinegar; but alas! all was unavailing; death was on his countenance. Within an hour he was under the half-deck, and a medical man on each side: within another hour he was a corpse. Poor fellow! he was soon gone. Not far from him, in a state of beastly intoxication, and unconscious of the fatal effects of his wager, lay the unfortunate man who had proposed it.

Now while we drop the sympathetic tear over his briny grave, let charity induce us to throw a veil over his miserable end, and from his lamentable fate derive instruction.

It is more than probable that if no restriction had been placed on the boats' crew, this accident would not have occurred. I would give, as an example, the *Asia*. She was, while I had the happiness of being in her, one of the most regular ships in commission since the peace; she was like a clock. And yet the boats' crews, when not immediately wanted, were allowed to go up. If they drank too much, they knew the consequence; severe punishment invariably followed: for there was nothing on earth Capt. Richards

detested more than drunkenness. Perfectly temperate himself, he expected the same from all hands. And although no restriction was placed on the men when ashore, instances of drunkenness were very few indeed.

Another instance of the fatal effects of drink, which fell under my notice a short time ago, deserves to be noticed here; after which more cheering subjects will occupy my pen.

In 1840, while ashore, volunteering men for the *Excellent*, I fell in with a seaman named Bezant, who stated himself to have left the merchant service, and that he had never been employed in the navy. Men who have never known the rules and regulations of a ship of war, are generally more difficult to bring up than those who from boyhood have been used to the service; this made me more careful of taking men of this kind; however, this man was an exception. His appearance pleased me, and being in the prime of health and strength, I entered him; and the next day, as he wanted no leave, commenced his instructions, and in an incredibly short time went through a considerable portion of them. Indeed, so satisfactory was his conduct, that when the Admiralty visited the ship, he was called out and marked as an example.

Hitherto all had ran smoothly, and his prospects were bright. But mark the change. Some fatal acquaintance formed ashore, induced him to leave the ship; and for the sake of two months' advance held out by a *crimp* (one guinea of which was to be the crimp's fee) *he ran*, was taken nearly drunk to a ship at Spithead, and thus committed a rash step which could never be retraced.

Intelligence, almost undoubted, was given me of the place where he had taken refuge, and I was sent to Spithead in search of him. And although he has since told me

that at the very time I was looking for him he was in the ship, yet my search was fruitless.

In December, 1842, while in London for a few hours only, on my way to Greenwich, I was surprised to hear myself called by name, by a man who had apparently lost one leg, and accompanied by two others, also disabled, was begging along the streets. Observing that I looked earnestly at him, as if to recal his features to my memory, he said, "Oh Sir, you dont know me; it's not likely you should; but when I tell you that I am B ——, the man whom you came to seek at Spithead, you will then, no doubt, recollect me. Well, Sir, I was in the ship the whole of the time; and from my place of concealment heard you say to the second mate, 'my information is correct; if he's in the ship I'll have him.' At that moment I felt inclined to come up and place myself at the mercy of my captain. Would to God I had followed up my first impulse; but I resisted, and was ruined. Your search was very rigid: at times you almost touched me; but it was unsuccessful, and I heard you depart thoroughly angry.

"The ship, which was very old, sailed for Quebec on her second voyage. A long passage out caused so much delay, that it was a matter of doubt, if we should attempt the river at all. However, at the beginning of December it was open, and clear of ice. We left the *Cul de Sac* on the 7th, and at 4.30 *a. m.*, on the 10th, ran ashore at Anticosta, and there she remained fast as a church. The snow fell in thick showers, we could hear our own men who had landed, talking, but not a spot of land was to be seen.

"The whole of the day the weather continued thick; and the ship was so leaky, that the timber soon floated in her hold. We remained on her deck all night, seeking what shelter her bulwarks afforded. About noon next day, men

stationed on the island for the purpose, found us out, and came to our aid. To them we owe our lives, but I could no longer stand on my right foot, it was so severely frost bitten that the only pain I felt from it was a numbness, I cannot describe. It is needless to continue the tale of woe; my leg, as you see, was amputated just below the knee; part of my hand was also taken off, and here I stand, a wretched beggar: you see before you the victim of one fatal rash step. When I left the *Excellent*, I did not dream of *running*: on the contrary, I had left everything ready to pass the fourth instruction on the next day (Friday); but that evening got *a little in the wind*: there were several ships at Spithead, in want of hands; a crimp came across me, and I ran for the prospect of a few more shillings monthly, and at least double my labour. And now I lead the life of a vagrant."

Poor fellow! the sleeve of a tattered red shirt wiped off the falling tear. A shilling put into his hand was all I could afford, and I left him; but he left an impression on my mind, which will never be erased.

A seaman on entering the Navy, has every opportunity of choosing his ship, so that he can have no excuse for running from it. If he finds his ship different to his expectation, the time is limited; he knows that the end is fast approaching, when he will again be free to seek another. It is not now as it was in days gone by, when, perhaps, just returned from a long and arduous voyage, he is seated at the fireside with his prattling child on his knee, or worse by far, torn from the very bed of his wife, to share the perils of the ocean, and brave the battle. All these horrors are done away with: the system of manning ships has improved with the march of intellect; and men who join the Navy, in nine cases out of ten gladly remain until

they are promoted, or get pensions, perhaps medals for long service and good conduct.

A youth now is apprenticed to the merchant service; he sails several voyages with credit; his last has ended his apprenticeship, and he is now his own master. A pretty good foundation for a knowledge of the world has been laid, by the various characters with whom he has sailed; he now makes a voyage or two as a man, and at each return, has, what he deems an inexhaustible sum of money to receive. He is soon undeceived. He spends his last penny with those who have robbed him of pounds; and frequently in want of food, naked, and homeless, he enters on board a ship of war, where his remaining years of service are spent. Many dangers attend his career, and it is but rarely all are escaped; he may be shipwrecked, drowned, wounded, perhaps killed, and soon, very soon forgotten. He dies at sea, and a messmate's tear dropped on his briny grave be all that marks his exit. Should he survive all, and exist beyond full strength, Greenwich Hospital, or a pension soothes the evening of his life.

Now view the merchant seamen, enfeebled by arduous service; there is alas, no provision made for the latter days of his useful life; it must be passed in menial drudgery, and labour fit for younger hands, and that too within the cheerless walls of a parish workhouse.

Should war again sound its alarm, it must be to our seamen, as instruments in the hands of Providence, that we must look for protection. Their ships must form a rampart to begirt our coasts; their bosoms so often bared to the storm must now be presented to an enemy's cannon, and can we then prize our seamen too much.

The establishment of libraries in the Royal Navy has more powerfully tended to improve the minds of seamen

than can be supposed. For many years that I served as a petty officer, before these libraries were given, a book of any kind on a ship's lower deck was a great rarity; and in any of the messes that had one, it was read and reread, and lent from mess to mess, until it became difficult to tell its original color; and even these were of a kind that frequently injured rather than improved the morals of the men.

One of the greatest comforts I enjoyed while serving as quarter master in the *Asia*, was a privilege granted me by Lieutenant now Captain Henry, of taking any book I chose out of his cabin to read, keep clean and return. Mr. H. had a valuable and ancient collection of the best authors, English and French; and this indulgence gave me a pleasure I can scarcely describe, and which I gratefully acknowledge even now. Nor was it lost to others, for in many instances my messmates and shipmates shared the benefit.

In one, sometimes in both the dog-watches, I sat at the mess table, and read to those around me. All were anxious for me to begin, and even attentive to me while reading. As a proof of this, the captain accompanied by the commander once came round the deck, and although every other mess rose as they went by, yet so intent were my messmates and myself upon the book, that not one moved; and the first intimation we had of the captain being near, was some one tapping me on the shoulder, and saying, "I say, Jack, you're in for it; there's the captain looking hard at you;" I immediately stood up, but was desired to go on, with, "I am glad to see you thus employed."

How different it is now; every man can get a book, and read for himself. He can go to the library, take out a volume from a well-selected stock of books, and one day with another at sea, can have three hours to read and im-

prove his mind. For instance, let us for a moment suppose a seaman to have had the forenoon watch in the top; he is relieved at noon, comes down, gets his dinner, at one bell his grog; and at least three hours and twenty minutes remain of the watch, for which he has to seek employment or amusement. Sleep he needs not, for during the night, which has been fine, he has slept both in his hammock and in the top nearly all the time. Cards he dares not play. The master-at-arms will take care of that; checquers, the only game of chance that is allowed in any ship, he is tired of. His mind naturally seeks something, and a book appears in a pleasing shape; the library, open in the latter part of the dinner time supplies him; he reads a few pages, and becomes interested in the hero or heroine of the tale, and thus he carries on, until the shrill whistle of the boatswain's mates arouse him to the next watch. Surprised at the quickness with which the watch has passed, he sticks the book in his bosom, and away he runs up the main rigging to relieve the top. There he either continues to read, or relates something that he has read; and thus, not only improves himself, but others of his topmates.

Perhaps there may be in the top (for there are in nearly all ships) some of that class of men who are worse than useless, men who if it were not to fill up the complement, would be far better out than in the ship. These men are seldom apprenticed to the sea; they are what Jack calls "picked up alongshore fellows," who after driving a donkey with vegetables, and committing all sorts of petty frauds and robberies, at last fly, and add one in number to the crew of a ship about to sail short handed; and after a series of voyages, at last find their way in the top of a ship of war, put there merely to fill up the numbers of the watch bill, and make it look uniform throughout.

It is inconceivable the mischief twenty such men will do among a ship's company (however large it may be); disaffected, never pleased with the rules and regulations of the service itself; and of the ship in particular, they spread discord every where. The captain of the after-guard, or top, or forecastle, would find it far less trouble to do a job himself than to make them do it; but the rules of the service require of him to see others work, and not work himself; and unless he proves a man of great firmness, he is often bothered.

Possibly such a being as I have now been describing is at this moment in the top, and frequently interrupts the conversation, or the reading; and by every means in his power (and there are many he can find) prevents their rational enjoyment. Still there are some on whom his attacks have no effect, and who, despite every thing, seek and obtain an education.

We have men now in the service, and I could name more than twenty from one ship, who, on their entry into her did not know a letter in the book; and now, within five years, have learnt to read, write, and cypher, merely at their spare time. I know one in particular, who was paid off with me from the *Asia*, in 1834, joined the *Excellent*, the same day, and at that moment did not know one letter from another however large it may be; and during the whole period of our being shipmates in the *A*, I had done what little writing he had. Even the letters to his wife were from me, and in these no doubt he would have gladly acted himself, but he had no alternative. As a seaman, he was every thing that was valuable, smart, active, and fearless; he was by officers and men universally respected.

CHAPTER III.

To be content ———.

'Tis being, and doing, and having, that make
All the pleasures and pains of which beings partake ;
To be what God pleases, to do a man's best,
And to have a good heart, is the way to be blest.

THE first day of my joining the ship was what is called in most ships sling-hammock day, and having a little leisure, I took a ramble over all parts of her, to scan, as it were, the ship on whose books I supposed myself to be placed for five years, little dreaming either of the lengthened period of comfort I was destined to enjoy within her wooden sides, or of ultimate promotion. One of the first objects that powerfully attracted my attention was the school, where men from twenty-one to forty years of age were ranged, with slates and books before them, and all attention ; the schoolmaster leaning over each in turn, apparently highly interested in his work. In the evening the man named in the former chapter, came for me to write a letter for him, which I willingly did, but at the same time told him, that

unless he attended school, I would write no more. He took me at my word, and became the most attentive (and to me the most troublesome), of scholars. His experience sufficiently proved how easy it is for a man to overcome difficulties which at first sight appear insurmountable. He was almost a slave to his book ; but his reward followed. He remained ten months in the ship, and went through his course of instruction with considerable credit. In the school he had got over the Rule of Three, and written above two-thirds of the book that was to entitle him to serve as a master gunner. In consideration of his great perseverance, the captain, Sir Thomas Hastings (although his book was not completed) granted him a certificate, class No. 1, and a powerful recommendation to the admiral on whose station he was about to serve. He is now a gunner of the second class, and looks back with pleasure on the day he entered the navy, and blesses that one on which he first sought learning.

I recollect once hearing an officer of the *Old School* observe, that "the less of education seamen possessed, the better they were fitted for the service ; for," continued he, "when they have much learning they are generally great sea-lawyers, and upon the whole troublesome characters." That such is the case in some instances, is beyond a doubt ; but these, happily, are exceptions. Nor does it follow, because some few persons prove troublesome, that the rest are to be kept in ignorance, and denied one of the greatest blessings it has pleased Providence to bestow on man : and if proof were necessary, I could shew that seamen, with a liberal education, do not prove more troublesome than others. I could name some hundreds who have served in the navy within the last ten years, and as far as was possible in their line of life, have proved a credit to the profes-

sion. If we consider for a moment how painful it must be for a seaman to be obliged, under all circumstances, to employ a friend to write his letters to wife, mother, child, or sweetheart, this, and this alone, should be sufficient inducement for men to push forward for an education.

There is no better way in which a young man can lead a correct path of life, or an old one persevere in it, than by cultivating his education on a Christian basis. Meet an old Pensioner in any part of the town, and enter into conversation with him; within half-an-hour he will tell you, that in the year ——, he would have been a warrant officer; Capt. —— wanted to make him one; but he had no *edication*, he was no *schollard*. From this it is evident, that the want of a little general information proved a permanent stumbling-block to his advancement. In by-gone days, parents with limited means found it a work of difficulty to meet the expenses of schooling for their children; but in these enlightened days, no such cause exists. In all large towns children may receive instruction at free cost, or nearly so; and in all ships of war, except the very smallest, there is a schoolmaster, who is compelled to pass a rigid examination before he can be entered, and who after entry, has no other duty to perform but to instruct the boys of the ship, and such seamen as may be disposed to improve themselves.

Now in order to add to this improvement, I would here humbly suggest, that a quarterly examination of those men who have been the most regular in attendance during the quarter should take place before the captain and officers, and a small reward in the shape of a book, neatly bound, given to one or more of the most proficient: and although the improvement at this moment going on is immense, it would then be far greater.

I never desire to be counted a writer. If I were able, I have no ambition to attempt it. I only wish to point out to those with whom I have spent so many comfortable days, the benefits offered in the navy; as well as to assure them, that I look back with sincere pleasure, after a long period of service, to the day in which I entered it; and also to present to them the results of my personal observations of life and character in their most striking exemplifications. With this view I have designedly set forth the most ordinary incidents, and hope that nothing will be found in these few pages but what is calculated to inspire every seaman with a right view of his position in society, a desire to fulfil his every duty for the credit of his ship, and to the satisfaction of those above him.

What real seaman is there in the Royal Navy who ever looked at his well-disciplined ship without pleasure, and felt the conscious pride of a Briton, that of all ships in the world, those of our beloved country were pre-eminent, and their men the most daring.

I recollect an instance of the most noble intrepidity exhibited by two seamen at Plymouth, in 1817 or 18, I cannot say which, or to what ship they belonged. One of them, a very old warrant officer, died only a few weeks since. These two men formed part of the crew of a prize full of contraband goods, which had been seized. It appeared afterwards that they were on shore on leave, and after a walk were returning to their homes.

All of a sudden the firebell commenced its awful peals; and the next minute found me, surrounded by a crowd of men, women, and children, running in the direction of an immense volume of smoke, which was seen rising above the adjacent houses. In a few minutes we reached the place where the fire was furiously raging. It had originated at

the back of a lot of old houses that formed a sort of square, so that it was impossible for the engines to play on it with any prospect of success. The inmates were vainly endeavouring to throw a few of the more valuable articles of furniture out of the windows; but their labour was soon arrested by the progress of the flames, which in a short period enveloped the whole buildings in a mass of flame and smoke.

At this moment, when every one present imagined, that although the loss of property would be great, life would be spared, a female, whose shrieks were agonising, appeared at one of the upper windows, with a child in her arms.

Of all the sights that can soften the heart of man and claim his assistance, a woman in distress is the first. "A ladder! a ladder!" issued from every mouth. But out of all the crowd assembled, only two or three had sufficient presence of mind to seek one; and these few were seamen belonging to a collier. However, a ladder was brought at last, and after some delay, placed end-on to the window. The poor woman was still at the window, sometimes holding out her child at arm's-length, sometimes pressing it to her bosom with convulsive grasp; then again extending her arms with the infant outside the window, while the smoke flew out in gusts, followed by sparks of fire, which every moment threatened her destruction. She seemed to say—Save! O save my child! whatever may be my fate.

A seaman, one of the two before-named, was standing at the foot of the ladder; the instant its upper end touched the wall he sprang up like lightning, leaving his companion to steady it at the foot. Among this vast crowd not a murmur was heard; expectation held her breath. Arrived at the upper end, Jack found that the ladder did not reach the lower window-sill by at least four feet, but even then

his presence of mind did not forsake him. Pulling off his neckerchief, which seaman like, was knotted round his neck, the ends flying like streamers in the breeze, he threw it up to the woman, who, in almost speechless agony, was watching his motions, and bade her tie it round the child's middle, and pass it to him. The poor creature did just as she was desired, and within one minute, Jack was walking backwards down the ladder with the child in his teeth, and carefully holding on both sides, amid the cheers of the assembled multitude. What a sight! Nor did it end here; for the instant his foot was off the ladder, his companion was on his way up, and having reached the top, made the female sit on the outside of the window-sill, and slide herself gently down into his arms. The shouts were at this moment deafening. Their narrow escape was soon proved, for within ten minutes the roof fell in.

A gentleman now rode through the crowd followed by several others, and in a voice of authority, asked their names, the ship they belonged to (I believe it was the *Tribune*, Capt. Willoughby), and several other questions; and when satisfied, gave them some money, and desired them to enjoy themselves, and he would see them in the morning. This was the Commander-in-chief.

Now you who sit in carpeted rooms, before your cheerful fires, when the ice forms strange and fantastic shapes on your windows; when you hear the sound of the horses' feet ring on the highway, and the wind whistling its grave-yard melody among the trees around your houses, think, then, oh, think, on the poor, the homeless mariner, and say (but say it from the heart) heaven help our defenders. And when his last shot is expended, and he is constrained to beg or starve (and there are some spirits that would prefer the latter); when he stands shivering at your door, with-

hold not the sympathising tear, nor close your hand upon his need.

How many seamen die: a coroner's inquest sits over their bodies, and a short period ends it. A verdict is brought in, "died by the visitation of God:" but in some cases, would not "died by the neglect of man," be by far the best and truest verdict. Forgive me, kind reader, for thus harassing your feelings, but just at that moment, the probable fate of my poor runaway shipmate came across my mind so powerfully, that it carried me away beyond my intention.

Now to return to the two seamen who so gallantly saved the life of the woman and the child; both were, through the kind influence of the admiral, who was a spectator of the scene, promoted to warrants: one is still living, and only a few years ago was my shipmate. Shipmate! what pleasing recollections the word conjures up. My old shipmate; it is a bond of brotherhood time cannot sever; a yarn in the rope of friendship, that will never part while memory shall endure. I have sometimes heard people talk of a noble action performed by some one I well knew, and how pleased have I exclaimed, "Oh, he was my shipmate!" (I love the name), it speaks powerfully, and says, have we not ate of the same bread, drank of the same cup, and been to each other as brothers.

I recollect an instance of noble and generous daring, performed by a mate, now Lieut. Hay Winthrop, in Halifax, 1837. I then belonged to the *Melville*, in which ship Mr. W. also served. I had but a few minutes relieved the deck for the middle watch, when I observed an immense volume of smoke ascending from the upper part of the town; and in a minute or two, the dock-yard firebell gave notice that a fire was raging somewhere in the neighbourhood. At 20 minutes to one, *a. m.*, the whole of the *Melville's* firemen

were working the dock-yard engines; but the only thing that could be done, was to prevent the spreading of the flames, for the houses then ignited being wood, and very dry, no hope remained of saving them. Shortly after we arrived, all the inhabitants of the houses then on fire left them, and gave up all their property and winter stock as lost. The last that came out was a woman, who just as she got to the door, recollected that she had left something very valuable in a cupboard up stairs, and in the moment of excitement, ran back along the passage to regain the spot where her hopes lay deposited; but before she could do so, the fire had got so powerful, that at the foot of the stairs she fell senseless from the smoke and heat. She was visible to all near the door; but to get to her, a long passage full of fire had to be passed: this was indeed an awful moment.

Mr. W., who had been assisting and cheering the men at the engines, and was dripping wet, made a rush through the flames, and taking the senseless body in his arms, ran back to the open air amid the cries of the assembled crowd. It was a pleasing sight. He was a fine powerful youth, and as fine an officer as I ever sailed with. He escaped with only a few burns; and the woman (the mother of a large family) recovered, and lived to bless his name.

It may be said by some who read these lines, that, like the bee, I wander from one subject to another; but it must be remembered, that I pursue the course of circumstances rather than continuity of subject.

There is another circumstance, which probably ought to have been mentioned before, as it took place years before the last mentioned; but that, among such a variety to cull from, it had entirely escaped my memory. It took place in the *Rochfort*, then bearing the flag of Sir G. Moore, and was as follows.

Among a set of almost useless beings, who did duty in the afterguard, was a man named Riley; he was one of the laziest of the lazy, and in consequence of which, the captain of the afterguard had to get rid of him. Accordingly, he was recommended to Lieut. Anderson (then No. 1 as he was called) for a cook's mate; and although Mr. John Shaw, the one-armed master of the galley, pleaded powerfully against it, yet Riley became his mate; and one, who was a better man, returned to his duty in the guard.

Now, among other qualities possessed by Riley, he could sing Irish songs, so as to delight the ears of all his countrymen. The consequence was, precisely what it is in most ships, Riley, almost every afternoon, was drunk; sometimes was flogged on the poop, and often had the first watch for punishment; but, alas, Riley was incorrigible.

One afternoon, much about the usual time, Mr. Shaw brought his mate aft to the officer of the watch for being drunk. One look convinced Mr. Sterling that he was so; and he said, "Send the rascal on the poop." The weather was fine, and the ship sailing about four knots, with royals set. A boat, which had been lowered to catch a small turtle, was hanging on her tackles astern, ready for another drop. Riley, after walking some time under the lee of the spanker, to catch the delightful breeze, all at once took a fancy to sit in the jolly-boat, and for a few moments all was right. The first intimation I had of Riley's cruise, was hearing old Halfpenny, the captain of the afterguard, say to his mate, "Well, if Paddy Riley don't have a ducking presently, it's a wonder to Kit Halfpenny."

A very few seconds proved Halfpenny's opinion to be correct; for Riley, leaning on the outer gunwale of the boat, tipped head foremost overboard. So sudden was the transition from air to water, that no one knew it, until the voice

of Riley was heard singing lustily from astern, "Och, are ye are all deaf? A man overboard—overboard—a man overboard—can't ye's help me?" The cry, "a man overboard," now resounded through the ship, which caused noise and confusion.

A fine young gentleman, named Palk, who was walking about the quarter-deck, learning the names of the various ropes about the mainmast, under the tuition of old Half-penny, jumped through one of the quarter-deck ports overboard; and before the ship was rounded to, or the jolly-boat could be lowered, he had succeeded in getting hold of Riley by the collar of his duck frock.

The boat reached them just in time to prevent both from being drowned: Riley was obliged to be hoisted up; and the young gentleman himself walked with difficulty up the ship's side: the boat was placed in her davits, and sail made on the ship. After Mr. Palk had changed his dress, the admiral's steward was sent to say, that Sir G. Moore wished to see him on the poop.

It seems to me that I see Sir Graham at this moment; his spy-glass under his left arm; his right hand thrown across, and resting upon it, the true type of a British Admiral. When the youngster came up the poop-ladder, Sir Graham surveyed him from head to foot, but it was a look of pleasure.

I do not recollect ever to have seen a youth of that age, with a countenance so pleasing, yet so manly; he was a man in miniature, one of those youthful men that only once or twice in our life comes before our observation. His eye brightened with delight, as Sir Graham Moore took his hand, and holding it a few seconds, said, "Well done my little man, you've begun well, you've saved the life of a fellow creature at the risk of your own."

“You see, Palk,” continued the admiral, “What drink causes; the fatal effects that arise from it; and the thousands of lashes it has caused to be inflicted in the Navy. Believe me my boy, I have spent the best years of my life on the ocean, and the necessary duties of the service, as well as my own inclination, have taught me to study the characters and abilities of my shipmates: and I have ever found, that the habitual drunkard is a pest to a ship’s company. Let me then impress it on your mind, in whatever station you may command, enforce strict discipline, and good order. Indeed, the one must follow the other, if you mean ever to be efficient to serve your country, or to be respectable in the eyes of the seafaring world; and above all, to defend your sovereign, and the rights and institutions of your happy little island; be strict in your duty, show an example, and your officers and men will respect you for it. To sum up the true character of the British seaman, he should be a man, who, if placed in difficulty, will have presence of mind to overcome it; if placed in danger, will possess the necessary courage to meet it; or if presented with an object of beauty, will regard it with all the enthusiasm of genuine admiration.”

Such, or very nearly such, was the address of the gallant admiral to the young gentleman before him; little did he think, that the man who then stood upon the after-gun, looking up at the main top-gallant sail, was storing in his mind the words which he uttered; or much less did he think, that after a lapse of so many years, the same words would again appear before him in print, and as advice to the junior branches of his profession.

I have endeavoured to lay before my brother tars the fatal consequences that have followed too great an indulgence in drink; I cannot advocate the cause of total absti-

nence, for I know, that before this could be accomplished, many troublesome scenes must occur. But the story of an old cobbler, that I read some forty years ago, comes so forcibly before me at this moment, as if praying me to relate it by way of example, that I feel constrained to do so, in the humble hope, that some, into whose hands these lines may fall, will benefit by their perusal.

In one of the Yorkshire villages lived Joe Miller, the cobbler, and his wife Molly; Joe was, without doubt, as hard working a man as any for ten miles round; yet his wife benefited but very little from his hard work; for if a neighbour brought in a job that was likely to pay well, Joe must always have half-a-pint of gin on the strength of it. Gin seemed to be the *summum bonum* of all Joe's wishes. Place the little black bottle before him, and the glass without a foot by the side of it, and Joe was the happiest of men. He drank and worked, and drank and worked again, until evening, which was invariably spent at the sign of the "Four Awls," the village ale-house.

It is, however, a long lane that has no turning. In the midst of his poverty (for though work was plentiful, Joe was always poor), he fell ill, and dangerously so. His fate has been that of thousands. His public-house friends in his hour of need forsook him. Not one came forward to assist or relieve him. Not one of those with whom he had spent so many jovial evenings, either soothed the mind or relieved the body of the sufferer. It was long ere Joe again sat on his stool at his occupation. But no sooner could he crawl, than he contrived to reach the "Four Awls," and obtain a supply of his beloved liquor on credit, which he eagerly drank at first; but it did not produce the enjoyment he expected.

That night to him was one of grief and pain; for every symptom of a relapse presented itself. However, God in

his mercy ordained it otherwise, and in a few days he was at his work again.

One afternoon about two o'clock, his wife coming into the stall, observed him sitting in a musing posture, apparently in deep thought, with the lapstone resting on his knees, his left hand carelessly thrown over it, and the right with the hammer in it, laying across. For some minutes he remained so; at last starting up, as if from the recollection of some painful dream, and looking at his wife said, "Molly, I'll drink no more; as long as I live I'll never taste gin again."

None but those who have experienced it can possibly tell what Molly felt: she thought she might depend upon him; for Joe, although a drunkard, was a man of his word (no common thing). The day passed off, and Joe went to bed that night perfectly sober; even from this, he found benefit, for he was able to get up early, and commence his work betimes: and Molly did indeed thank God for his amendment. Breakfast over, Joe resumed his work, but only a few minutes after sitting down, poor Molly was thunder-struck, at hearing the well-known, though unexpected words come from the stall, "Molly, fetch me half-a-pint of gin." However painful the order, Molly knew from the tone in which it was given, that she dared not disobey; painfully did she take the small bottle with which she had so many times before gone the same round of duty; walked slowly to the alehouse, and there found the landlady quite ready to serve her. Molly with a heavy heart returned to her husband, whom she now found hammering away, and singing as cheerful as a lark: for a moment she stood with the bottle in her hand, fully expecting the usual words, of "Come, Molly, give us a nip," but no such order came; Joe contented himself with merely

pointing with his hammer to the window, as a signal for the bottle to be placed there, and continued his work and song. Molly stood by for some time, but seeing that Joe still worked and sung without touching the bottle, she turned round to go away, exclaiming, "He's mazed, sure."

Thus passed the whole of the forenoon, Molly taking an occasional peep at Joe, who still worked, and now and then broke out into a verse of a song, but the bottle remained untouched. In her last visit, however, the real truth of the case flashed across her mind, for she observed Joe repeatedly shake his hammer at the bottle, and then say to himself, with apparent delight, "I've conquered thee, oh mine enemy!"

And he had indeed conquered; Joe Miller never was seen sitting in the chimney corner of the "Four Awls." In fact, at any time when business led him to pass by the house, he was observed to hold down his head, as if near an object with which he was ashamed to claim acquaintance.

The consequence was visible in a short time; Joe Miller, who in his worst days had always a good share of the village work, now got a double part, for his promise could be depended upon: his materials were good, and the work strong. The house too, which had been dreadfully neglected, now assumed a new appearance. A new table, and some chairs were seen in the little back room; pewter plates and dishes shone on the shelves; new crockery-ware from the village shop, replaced the broken tea cups: and better, far better than all, Joe and Molly were seen arm in arm, decently clothed, going to the house of God on the Sabbath morning, each with the glow of renovated health on the cheek, and the smile of happiness visible to all. And when, in the humble attitude of prayer, they presented an example it were well for thousands to follow.

Again, I say, I would not advocate the cause of total abstinence in the navy ; but this I feel assured of, that the less spirits are issued the better. The proof is easily obtained. If it were possible to examine the logs of two different ships of the same class, the one, at the time when half-a-pint of rum was issued to each man daily, and the other (since 1824), when the allowance was reduced to one-half that quantity, and then carefully compare the punishment at both periods, I feel convinced, that it would be found, that the number of lashes inflicted in the first period, would by far more than double the latter period. Then examine the log of a ship of the present time, after having been three years in commission ; and it will be found, that one-half the punishment inflicted, has been for excessive drinking, or neglect and errors caused by it.

Seeing then, as every man may, who will consider for one moment, the dangers, the fatal accidents that occur from excessive drinking, would it not be possible to devise some plan for its decrease.

The rising generation of seamen are men far different from those of former years. It has been said by old officers that they have lost a good deal of that reckless daring which distinguished their predecessors. Admitting this to be the case, what is wanting in the one particular, is certainly well made up in judgment ; it is seldom that a seaman's presence of mind forsakes him, even in the most imminent danger. Acquainted as I am with a ship's lower-deck, after a sojourn of twenty-two years, I can enter into all the feelings of my brother seamen, and see at a glance the vast improvements that have taken place, both in morals and character. During the first six years of my naval career, provisions and very rough clothing were all that was issued in a ship of war ; blue jackets of the coarsest kind, with

black horn buttons, on which were stamped a foul anchor, and *sailor bold* for a motto; duck frocks and trowsers, the trowsers cut by a machine, and double the size for a moderate man; and the frocks scarcely half long enough, with a coarse felt hat, that you might beat into any shape, and as easily restore; check shirts with a collar one-and-a-half inches deep, and these very dear, completed the catalogue of clothes which the seaman possessed.

Now, see the difference; cloth, flannel, and duck, all of good quality, silk handkerchiefs, drawers, in fact, every article of dress necessary ready for a man at his entry; if he is not, he can be, in twenty minutes, new from head to foot; and in all this, no overcharge. The prices are so moderate, that it would be quite impossible for any one ashore to get them at the same price. Now, if a seaman is careful, he need never be without money; it is paid at least quarterly in all ships, in proportion to the pay and rate of each man.

My *debut* in the navy was in the *Rockfort*, Capt. C. M. Schomberg, and his first lieutenant, Edward Sparshot, now an old post captain, as strict a disciplinarian, and as smart an officer as could be well met with. Ships of war had not, in those days, arrived at that flying method of performing their various evolutions to which they have now attained; but the *Rockfort's* ship's company were smart in all their motions. Indeed, with Mr. S., they must be so; for although every order was rigorously enforced, it was done without a shadow of tyranny.

As I looked at her alow and aloft, and beheld for the first time, the immense fabric in which I was to spend perhaps the best years of my future life, my very heart sunk within me, just come from a small vessel of only 230 tons, as master of her, to join with a body of men so numerous

rous, and of so many different tempers, alarmed me beyond measure; but having well considered the step I had taken, I saw no other alternative. I felt thankful for the kind manner in which Mr. S. had accepted my humble services in preference to many others, and probably some of them far superior in ability to myself. I several times caught his searching eye fixed on me.

Although a perfect stranger in the ship, and quite as much so to the service, I nevertheless found a friend. After walking the gangway for some time, the bell struck eight, and "Pipe to dinner" followed. It seemed to cause a general move, for every one seemed anxious to get below.

At this moment an elderly man came up to me and said, "Come, mate, you seem a stranger, come down with me, and have some dinner." He was evidently a man who had seen much service, and appeared, from his conversation, to possess an education far superior to the general run of seamen; I thankfully accepted his offer—not that I could eat anything; O no! If all the roast beef and plum-pudding in England had been set before me, I could not have swallowed a single mouthful—but because I saw in him the face of a friend; of one who would guide my inexperience, and in whose path I could tread; and I was doubly pleased when Mr. Sparshot, who unperceived, had observed all our motions, "Aye, French, take him with you, he's one of my quarter masters." I followed French down the ladder, and into his mess, and soon found myself on the inside end of the stool, with beef, bread, and potatoes, before me. A few minutes after the bell struck one, and before the sound was well out of it, the "Pipe to grog" followed. Each man's allowance was put into a bason, and each man in turn presented it to me to share the contents with him, which I declined, but at the same time felt grateful for the kindness shown me.

After dinner all hands were employed in making clues for my hammock, each member of the mess taking a share, so that towards evening I was fitted out completely—my hammock ready, and every act of kindness performed that friendship could dictate. This, and many other circumstances, convince me that more real friendship existed among tars of the Old School, than among those of the present day. Men were then endeared to each other by mutual dangers, mutual sufferings, and mutual privations, as well as by length of service in one ship. Now all know the probable expiration of their period of service; and if the ship, &c., does not please them, at the end of the station they seek another—see fresh faces, have fresh shipmates, and but little remains to recal those who are gone.

French I found to be a man of superior education, but who, from untoward circumstances had sought in a ship of war, what elsewhere he was denied; and from a school-master had become a most notorious land-smuggler. After experiencing the various fortunes incidental to his calling, sometimes with a well-filled purse, at other times the reverse, he had become a man-o'-war's man; and in consideration of his education, Mr. S. employed him to draw out watch and quarter bills, and to instruct the boys of the ship in reading, &c. He was a native of Port Arlington, in Ireland. To him I owe many a kind action. For nearly five years we were messmates, and during the whole of that period our friendship was not interrupted by a single disagreement.

Poor fellow! his fate was dreadful. Having, at our return in 1824, a tolerable sum of money to receive, besides a small amount left him by an officer who died, and on whom he had attended, he recommenced his former occupation of smuggling, and after its usual vicissitudes, died from a pistol-ball fired by the coast-guard, while attempt-

ing to carry inland a cargo of contraband spirits. He is no more : but his many acts of kindness I shall remember till my latest breath. From him I copied my conduct—for he was particularly attentive to his duty in the ship ; and from his example I said to myself, as far as it is possible for man, I will give satisfaction ; I will mark out a path for myself, and deviate neither right nor left.

I thus commenced by studying the characters and dispositions of my superiors, and so far succeeded, that in six months a ship of war was no longer new to me. I was soon tolerably comfortable, considering my change of circumstances, and almost felt a ship of war to be my home.

In the *Rochfort* I found much unpleasantness, but there were also pleasures. It was a rule with Mr. S. to reward good and smart conduct, as well as to punish the idle and neglectful.

I well remember one circumstance, which as it was at the very commencement of the station, created no small sensation among those before the mainmast. The ship was then lying in the Bay of Naples ; the *Vengeur*, *Revolutionnaire*, and several other English ships were in company ; there were also several French, Austrian, and one poor dirty looking Spaniard. It was a beautiful day. All the squadron had their sails loose, and the bowlines hauled out. The only ship we had to fear in reefing and furling was the *Revolutionnaire*, she being fully manned and disciplined.

A few minutes before the signal was to be made to furl sails, Mr. S. called the captains of the fore and main-top to him, and as he stood on the carronade slide, he said, " Look there my lads, do you see that ship ? " " Yes sir," was the answer from all. " Well then," continued Mr. S., " as you see her, so surely you must beat her both in reefing and furling, and recollect, our booms must be down first."

A fine active fellow, named Sibbald, who was one of the captains of the main-top, looked up at the lieutenant, and very coolly said "Beat her, aye, aye, sir, we'll beat her, and have a nap on the yard too, or my name's not Joe Sibbald."

They did beat her certainly, but that was all, there being not one moment to spare. The *Rochfort's* booms were lowered first, and Mr. Sparshot was satisfied. The master-at-arms was now called, and ordered to rank all the prisoners up on the quarter-deck, and when done, Mr. S. addressed them as follows.

"Now gentry, there are some of you before me who deserve as good a flogging as ever was given in the navy, but I'll whitewash you all." Observing that one of the prisoners was about to thank him, he said, "Dont thank me sir, thank your shipmates for having done your work and their own smartly and well;" then taking the list from the master-at-arms, he tore it to pieces, and pitched the fragments through the port.

The mixture of good and evil, in our present state of existence, is an adage as old as the world, particularly in a ship of war; but its truth is within the observation of every one, and strengthens the argument, that rigid discipline, (without tyranny) is necessary in a ship of war, if only for the comfort of a well regulated ship. And were my own career of service to recommence, I would always choose a ship in which every duty was attended to strictly, in preference to one in which a man did almost as he liked. Indeed, I've frequently heard old seamen say (when two ships were in commission, and both wanting hands), "I'll go with Captain ——, he's a taut one, but he's captain of his own ship."

On joining a ship of war, a man who wishes to ensure the comfort of a station, should study the character of his offi-

cers, and by every fair means in his power, endeavour to gain their confidence; and above all things, remember that during the time a ship is fitting out, the eye of every officer is upon him: nor is it ended when the day's work is over. The gunroom and the wardroom tables generally discuss the characters and abilities of the petty officers and seamen of the ship; and it frequently happens that ratings, disratings, and even discharges come from the table. A good character from an officer sometimes does wonders, for I've known men get over serious errors by an officer stepping forward, and bearing witness to their good conduct in a former ship. I myself recollect obtaining leave at a very particular time, because a lieutenant said at the breakfast table to the commanding officer, "that he knew I had never broken my leave,"—nor had I. In my long period of service, my name has only been off a ship's books thirty-seven days, and yet I never broke my leave one hour.

Some men possessed of good abilities, on joining a ship, keep them hid, as if afraid of improving or making use of the blessings providence has bestowed upon them. It is of great consequence in some voyages (say of discovery), that the captain and officers of a ship should not only be well acquainted with the characters, but also with the abilities these men may possess, so that under any exigency, they may be brought into use. By thus endeavouring to make myself useful in several ships, I have gained favors and privileges I dared not otherwise have looked for, which will be related in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

Years rush by us like the wind ; we see not whence the eddy comes, nor whence it tends, and yet time beguiles us of our strength. Happy is the man, who like the Miller, employs every gift of fortune to his advantage in preparing for a better world.

While serving in the *Asia*, 84, in 1831, then laying at Spithead, the commander, now Captain Sir R. Oliver, was very desirous of having his hammocks marked in some particular way, and although the ship was fully manned, there was no painter on board. Being quarter master of the morning watch, and overhearing the master-at-arms telling the Commander, that among all hands, he could find no one able to mark hammocks, I immediately stepped up, and taking my hat off, said, "Sir, I'll mark your hammocks with much pleasure."

"Will you, my lad ; how long will it take you to mark the two sets?" "One week, Sir, I replied." Commander Oliver, who had but lately joined the ship, and knew very

little of her company, surveyed me from head to foot, and then said, "Go on, quarter master, and when you've finished, I'll give you three days' leave."

Now brother seamen, the ship had been lying at Spit-head five weeks: there was not a man allowed to leave her, even for one hour's leave; and I could see the chimneys of my own dear little home, and no prospect of getting there, until the present favorable circumstance took place; you may therefore judge how thankful I felt for the possession of abilities however trifling, that were likely to produce to me such happy results.

It was then Tuesday, I worked hard, scarcely allowing myself time for my meals, and on Saturday, at noon, I reported one set of hammocks ready to issue; and the second marked, but not dry. As soon as the first set was placed ready on the quarter-deck, Commander O. called me to him, and said, "Now go and clean yourself, and come to me." I did so, when he put a sovereign in my hand, and said, "There's the jolly boat for you to land—go on." Did not this repay me well for any exertion I had used, but it did not end here; it acted powerfully during my stay in the ship, and raised me a friend who has always served me by every means in his power.

I trust that those who may read these pages will do me the justice to believe, that any thing I may say about myself is not from any motive of pride, or to show to others how useful I have made myself; Oh no! I solemnly declare, that it is not so; my motive is only to point out to the young and inexperienced of the navy, the rocks they may avoid, and the paths they may follow to ensure comfort; to tell them, as I do others every day, that a ship of war of the present day offers comforts and privileges, no other class of ships can admit of.

I recollect a circumstance that took place in the *Asia*, while lying in the Tagus, that will point out to seamen in general the benefits of sobriety, far more powerfully than volumes written on the subject could do.

The man to whom it occurred, must, in these pages be nameless, but I know him well, and hundreds, now living, can vouch for its truth.

It happened one afternoon, that a great disturbance took place in a mess on the starboard side of the lower deck. Four of the men had been enjoying themselves over that worst of evils in a ship, the overplus of grog, and as in seven instances out of ten, had quarrelled over it. One of them, an able seaman, in a moment of the highest aggravation struck the man with whom, a few minutes before, he had been drinking on terms of intimacy; the man who received the blow was a petty officer, and although he richly deserved a hundred times what he got, still the Articles of War were in his favour, which he immediately took advantage of by running up on the quarter deck to complain of his late friend.

The commanding officer, after hearing the complaint, which was supported by the evidence of three men who had seen the blow inflicted, ordered the man in irons, and thus it remained until the next morning, when (as it was called among the tars), Shadwell was open.

This took place immediately after divisional muster at nine o'clock, at which time every man who had committed any offence during the last twenty-fours, was ranked up abaft the mainmast, and Captain R. himself, investigated the case most carefully; it being his rule never to allow any man to be punished, however slightly, except by his own immediate order.

The case now in question being the most serious, Captain R. disposed of all the minor offences first; however,

after a patient examination, it being proved that the blow had been given to a petty officer, the man who had given it was about to be ordered back in irons; but ere he did so, Captain R. asked him what he had to say for himself, observing at the same time, that there was scarcely any thing that could justify his conduct.

The prisoner, who was a rather sensible man, and had picked up a passable education, looked up at the captain, and said, "Sir, I own to the blow, and feel truly sorry for having broken the rules of the ship, which with me is not a common thing; for, believe me, Sir, I strive to fulfil my duty—but we had all been drinking; I was not sober, and the rest were worse than myself, so that not one of us can correctly state what happened; but there is a petty officer on board who was sitting in the next mess writing, he alone can tell how it happened. It was——."

"Where is he?" exclaimed Capt. R——; "Send him aft." The man soon appeared from among the crowd assembled to hear the examination, when Capt. R—— said, "Now, Sir, let me have your version of the story; for if every other man in the ship was drunk, I know that *you*—laying great stress on the word—were sober."

It appeared to me that the man grew half-an-inch at this address, while a glow of delight overspread his features as he thus answered the captain—

"Sir, I humbly thank you for your good opinion of me; and believe, Sir, if that man (pointing to the petty officer who had received the blow), had said to me what he did to the prisoner, I fear I should have acted much worse. He then related all that had passed in a clear manly way, and when ended, the captain, with a look that spoke volumes, said to the petty officer,

“For you, Sir, had very nearly caused me to inflict severe punishment on a man who did not deserve it. The language you used was degrading beyond measure; and if that man had not taken the law into his own hands, I should have disgraced you: that blow saves your badge; but recollect it hangs only by a thread. Go! Sir, but be careful of your conduct in future.”

Now, my brother seamen, before I quit you, perhaps never more to hear of you, and certainly never more to join with you in seafaring duties, let me give you the advice of an aged friend, one whose hair has grown gray with the toils of nearly half a century upon blue water: let me not hold myself up to you as an example; look carefully round for a better one, and follow that. But as a certain noble writer says in one of his works, there are few books, however bad, from which something good may not be learnt. Let me then lay before you rules which I have as nearly as possible endeavoured to follow myself. First,—Do everything in its proper time. Second,—Keep everything in its proper place. Third,—Put everything to its proper use.

Suppose now that you are a petty officer, and captain of a top, these rules are invaluable: follow them yourself, and make your topmen do the same; then, however sudden the visit of a superior may be, your top will be ready, and everything in order. To gain respect and ensure comfort, keep the men that are placed under you at a proper distance. Do not mistake me. I do not mean that you are to top the officer over them; but simply, that whenever anything requires to be done, never do it yourself—a working petty officer is only encouraging the lazy—but give your orders in such a way that all may know they must be obeyed, and that without demur. Have no favourites at board or in the top; let every man bear his own share of

the general burthen ; or in other words, let every man do his own work. You may occasionally have young men placed under your care for instruction ; do all you can to teach them, and be assured that a day will arrive when they will be grateful for your kindness.

It frequently happens that young gentlemen, the sons of captains, perhaps admirals, on their first entrance into the navy, are put into a top, under the care of an old petty officer, for instruction ; remember always when such is the case, that it is a proof of the confidence of your superiors in the abilities you possess. Be cautious to avoid undue familiarity, or of losing sight of the respect due to their rank, remembering that those young gentlemen who are now dependent on you for instruction, and thankfully receiving your attentions, will (if life be spared), in their turn become captains and admirals, and you possibly live to see it ; nor will they forget, in the old worn-out tar, the instructors of their inexperienced youth.

Never make unnecessary complaints ; as far as you can avoid it, keep your name from being mentioned on the quarter deck. There are in almost, indeed I may say in every ship, a class of men who are ever dissatisfied with the rules of their ship, with the issue of provisions, their quality, and all the various *et ceteras*, and are frequently heard to say, "Our petty officers will not look into it, or things would be far better than they are."

These men would be constantly sending the petty officer aft on some frivolous pretence, either to ask favours which cannot be granted, or to make complaints which cannot be remedied. Whenever it has been your morning watch, and any reasonable cause of complaint occurs, it is your duty to attend to it. Naval routine directs it, your messmates and shipmates require it ; but ere you go, consider well the why and the wherefore.

In the whole of my twenty years of service as a first class petty officer, I never would go abaft the mainmast to ask a favour or make a complaint after grog time; for depend upon it, however well founded your desires may be, they look with suspicion upon Dutch courage.

In the issue of provisions, whenever it comes to your turn to attend the beef block, the grog tub, or the scales in the purser's steward's room, be careful to see justice done to the ship's company, and at the same time not allow the purser to be robbed by making over weight. Your ship-mates look to you for their pound and pint; and if you allow short weight or measure to be given, you commit a robbery to all intents and purposes as if you took money. In no instance after or before the issue of provisions allow the purser's steward to bring out his bottle. If it is before the issue, it is not in respect to you, it is to bribe you to dishonesty; if after the issue, it is to reward you for an act which every British petty officer should revolt from. The sums of money saved to pursers in some ships by a few gallons of rum are astonishing.

I recollect a purser's steward once saying in the *Asia*, that rum spoke all languages, and that he could buy every petty officer in the ship with a bottle of it. I very soon convinced him of the fallacy of his boast, and got him the first watch for a week into the bargain.

Whenever any particular duty has to be performed, it often happens that the captain, or the commanding officer says, order —— to do it (naming some particular man) he will do it to my satisfaction. Such an opinion is a mark of confidence not to be thought lightly of. I would say, at all times do your duty, but more especially in a case of this kind; go, if possible, beyond it.

If there is one period better than another for trying a man, it is in the hour of danger. Danger exercises such

power over the human mind, that nearly all give way to the means of self-preservation. I would say to seamen, never unnecessarily court danger, but never in a point of duty shun it. Once placed in a dangerous position, he should concentrate all his energies to overcome it.

However strongly you may be tempted, and whatever be the usage, never run from a ship of war; never avail yourself of the old, but very bad system, of going ashore upon the *New Act*. I could fill a quire of paper with instances of misery and punishment that have followed either of these cases. A seaman who leaves the service of his country to serve in a mercenary cause, must recollect that he fails in the duty he owes to guard his sovereign, to support the rights, the privileges, and the institutions of a country which has no equal. He disgraces himself in the eyes of the naval world; and the very temptations which have been laid before him add to his crime; because he may well rest assured, that it is not his person which is required—it is his ability, or whatever advantage of learning he may possess.

Discoursing on this subject with a seaman, whose education was rather superior, and whom I suspected felt inclined to leave England, I endeavoured to point out to him the folly of such a step; after some argument, he said, "But why are we not better paid?" I answered, "That, taking everything into consideration, no seamen in the world are better paid than those of our navy." It is certainly true, that a seaman in an American ship-of-war draws more dollars; but he has, out of his pay, to supply himself with one-third of his provisions, or do without tea, cocoa, &c. Again, look at the difference of price, and quality of clothing; a jacket and trowsers, for which the purser charges twenty-one shillings, will cost in America, at least,

thirty-seven: a blanket, which is issued in our navy at seven and sixpence, is, in the American navy charged three dollars, equal to thirteen shillings sterling.

Again, see the hardships and ill-usage that both officers and men experience, who enter into a foreign service: whatever be their sufferings, whatever be their usage, they have no appeal, they cease to be British subjects, and no consul can notice them, or afford them even momentary relief. The Irish legion in the service of Don Pedro, composed of seamen and soldiers of our own country, ought to be a sufficient example to every English subject to stop at home and fight the battles of his own country. In the rivers of blood of our seamen, that have dyed the foreign soil, while fighting in a mercenary cause, whenever any post of danger has appeared, it has always been assigned to them; and in nine cases out of ten have come off with heavy loss, and bad pay. I am personally acquainted with no less than five men, who, unfit for active exertion from wounds, and various other causes, contracted in a foreign service, are now lingering out the remains of a miserable life, as paupers within the walls of a workhouse.

To convince the seamen of my country of the great folly and misfortune that mostly follows their running from a ship; I will select one or two examples from an immense number that have come under my immediate observation, and place them as a beacon, on a rock I would pray them to avoid.

In the year 1836, the *Melville*, bearing the flag of Admiral Sir P. Halkett, left England to take the command of the West India station. A body of men, I think thirteen in number, were sent from the *Excellent*, and among them myself, as a quarter master, doing duty as coxswain of the launch. Among the able seamen, was a man named Hull,

who, from being a passable scholar had gone through his instructions with credit, written a book, and obtained a certificate, class No. 1, which proved him fit to serve as master gunner in any of His Majesty's ships, which, no doubt would have been the case, as it has been with all others who had like certificates, had his conduct merited it. But from the time of the ship leaving England, Hull had, at every opportunity, given way to excessive drinking, and had, through that, lost the confidence of all the officers.

The ship had been some months on the station, when, for the second time she returned to Halifax; where leave on shore was given to one watch at a time; Hull and myself being in the same watch, landed together. In the course of the afternoon, while enjoying a walk, I met the master of an American brigantine, who entering into conversation with me, unasked, laid before me the great superiority of the American over our service; the pay great, provisions good, &c., and at last ended by saying, that he was aware of what ship I belonged to, and if I would leave the *Melville*, I should have thirty dollars a month, with a promise of increase.

I took a good look at the man, and said, "Well Sir, as soon as I see Captain Douglas, I'll not forget to tell him of the shameful attempt you have made to entice his men to desert," and thus we parted.

At the expiration of my leave, I returned to the ship, Hull was not there; day after day passed, and he did not appear. At last it was ascertained beyond a doubt, that, while in a state of drunken excitement he had consented to go to Boston, with the same man from whom I had escaped.

A year after, I saw a letter that had come from this same man, to one of the *Excellent's* scamen, informing him how very comfortable he was. His pay good, and privileges

great ; so far, so good, as Jack says. He might have done well, had he continued steady and sober ; but to a man of his principles, that was impossible ; he gave way to his old excesses, got repeatedly flogged, and last of all discharged with disgrace, from the very service that had taken such pains to seduce him. And where is he now ? Most probably in our own service, under a feigned name, and afraid that every stranger he sees marks him for a deserter : when, had he but for one moment reflected, the very thought of his home, his wife, his child, would have induced him to spurn the tempter from him, and return to his ship ; for surely the question may be asked of all seamen,

Breathes there the man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself has said
This is my own, my native land, &c.

My home, the spot where I've spent so many happy hours, where, in the bosom of my family, I've for the time being forgot the world and all its cares.

Who is there that has not looked up at his own little dwelling place as he returned from afar, and asked himself with sudden consciousness of the instability of all things, "Shall I find nothing gone amiss ? Has no misfortune trod on my threshold ? Has disease, sorrow, or death never visited my humble home ?" Such were my fears, till assured that all was well.

A second example I wish to place before my friends on the folly of going ashore without leave.

In the same ship, and on the same station, was a man named Smith ; I think he did duty on the forecastle, but that matters little. Smith had commenced the station badly : a dark cloud hung over him at Spithead, for while there he had been suspected of an act of dishonesty ; but he was a good seaman, and attentive to his duty, and that

covered a multitude of faults. At Halifax, however, something occurred, and Smith was in the black list; and just at that time it was double punishment, for leave was given to the ship's company, and of course black-list men were excluded from the privilege. It was galling in the extreme.

I well recollect the first evening that liberty had been given, another quarter master named John Drew, and myself, had the first watch; about half-past eight we were walking the gangway; Smith was leaning over the hammock-netting talking, half to himself and half to us; only a few words passed, but suddenly starting up, he looked very hard at Drew, and after a moment's gaze said, "Jack, I'll go on shore this night, if the Devil stands in the gangway!"

We both endeavoured to deter him from his purpose, pointing out the certain punishment if he went, especially as his name was already in the black list; all our efforts failed in moving him from his purpose, and he went. In the course of the watch Drew and myself were talking of Smith and his going ashore, when I observed, "Would it not have been an act of charity to save that man, by warn-the master-at-arms of his intention to go on shore?"

"Yes, it would," replied Drew, "and be hooted at all round the ship as an informer. No, no, boy, among such a lot of men as this ship's company is composed of, look out for number one, and let him go his own road." He did go.

Next morning Smith was missing from the mess-table; the captain of the fore-castle also reported him absent to the boatswain. Day after day passed, and Smith was almost forgotten; or if ever named, some old tar would reply, "O put him down expended—he's off;" meaning that he had deserted. He was indeed expended; but had not run.

About three weeks had elapsed, and Smith's name was no longer thought of. Drew and myself had the afternoon watch ; it was then about two o'clock. I was looking out for signals from the Admiral's house, and the signal-mate having gone below on duty, and left his glass on the skylight, I took it up, and for some time was spying up and down the harbour, when at last my glass rested upon a black mass just at the water's edge ; I asked the signalman to look at it, who in a moment pronounced it to be a dead body. The jolly-boat was manned, and on getting there it was found to be the body of the unfortunate man Smith, who in swimming from the ship had lost his life. He could not have been on shore, for in the corner of his neckerchief was found eight shillings and sixpence, which was all the money he was known to have on the evening of his leaving the ship.

So much for the poor body—that we knew, decomposed as it was. It was laid in the silent grave—but, as the Rev. Mr. Uniacke said, as he read the funeral service, “Where, oh, where was the soul ?” I trembled as I looked into the grave. Very few attended his funeral ; merely his mess-mates. Being on shore on duty, I went to the burying ground to take a lesson, and a lesson I certainly got. I firmly believe that few were present who do not to this day bear in mind the impressive address of the reverend gentleman.

I recollect a circumstance that occurred in the *Blossom*, in the year 1825, which, as far as regarded life, was not fatal ; but it was highly injurious to the man, and still more so to his family ; and as it shows the effects of running from a ship of war in its true colours, I will just relate it. The ship to which I allude was fitting at Woolwich for a scientific discovery voyage. A man named Mathews was one of

six who had volunteered for the ship, and joined her on a Monday morning. All were supplied with slop-clothing until the clothes sent on board as gifts could be issued. All six worked at the rigging until the Sunday, a day on which general leave was given. All six put their names down for leave, and got into a boat to go to London; just before they shoved off from the ship, it struck me I was having the last view of them, for all at once they broke out singing a song, the chorus of which was,

“Huzza, my jolly boys, it’s time for us to go;

Huzza, my jolly boys, it’s time for us to go—o—o.”

“Is it though,” said Mr. Peard, the first lieutenant, who was just then looking over the gangway, “not quite, not quite time; come up here, gentlemen. Here, master-at-arms, take care of these men until they’ve at least worked for their clothing, and by that time I think there will be no fear of their leaving the ship.”

In about a week the ship sailed for Spithead, and all liberty ended; six months’ advance was paid, and other ships’ boats doing all our work, none but the first gig’s men were allowed out of the ship.

At four o’clock one morning, while mustering to wash decks, Mathews was found missing; about breakfast time he was towed alongside on a grating lashed to two of the boats’ barricoes, in which state he had been floating about Spithead all night. No punishment was inflicted. At the commencement of an arduous voyage, the captain thought it best to pass it over. Now any one in the world would have fancied this to have been sufficient warning. But, alas! it did not prove so; Mathews was determined not to go the voyage; and without considering the advance he had received, or the loss his services would be (for he was a useful man), no sooner was the ship anchored in Rio

Janeiro, than himself and five more took the boat from the stern of the ship, and landed themselves, leaving the boat on shore.

A week after he was retaken going out of harbour in a transport, named the *Waterloo*; the others shared the same fate and the same punishment.

Mathews now appeared reconciled, went about his work willingly, and even his messmates were led to suppose that he had given up all thoughts of leaving the ship until her return to England. However, he was only making assurance doubly sure.

One evening while at San Francesco, the cutter returned without Mathews; and the next morning it was ascertained that he had taken the only step that could assure his safety, as well as a supply of all needful on his journey, even a guide.

It appears that as soon as he left the boat, he walked four miles through the woods to a neighbouring mission, to the priest, who spoke some English. He candidly stated that he had run away from an English ship of war, and the reason he had done so was, that he was a good Catholic, and in consequence of his religion was persecuted by the officers and men of the ship, who were all heretics, and hoped the reverend father would advise and aid him in distress.

The Padre, who although no bigot to his religion, felt it a sacred duty to release a child of his Church from such a crew as ours, gave him every assistance in his power—a horse, a guide, money, and provisions; and when an officer of the ship was sent to make inquiries respecting Mathews, the priest candidly informed him that the man he sought was then within the pale of the Catholic Church, and no power should induce them to give him up. Some time afterwards I was sent in a cutter to the same mission

for provisions ; the old Padre, finding I spoke Spanish well, would gladly have persuaded me that I must also be a good Christian, as he called it ; but on my firmly asserting that I was in reality no heretic, that I revered my religion, and loved my country, he turned up his eyes as if in the act of prayer, and at last exclaimed in French, which he spoke perfectly, “ Ah ! mon fils, je suis trompé—je suis trompé.” (Ah ! my son, I am deceived—I am deceived.)

CHAPTER V.

"The ills of life may be classed under three heads, ideal miseries, minor miseries, and afflictions, or real miseries. The first of these are not worth one serious thought; the next are irksome to bear; but for the last, there are remedies of a never failing nature to which the Christian repairs, and he is then enabled to say, "Cast down, but not forsaken, sorrowful, yet rejoicing, having nothing, yet possessing all things."

AN OLD QUAKERESS.

THE old Priest spoken of in my last chapter, was of all men I ever met, the most inexperienced. Hence the facility with which Mathews had acted upon his mind; and from several visits I made to his mission, I was confirmed, that had he seen the action he did in its right light, no persuasion could have induced him to do it.

But that was not all, Mathews gave him a deal more trouble, and although he acted as nearly as could be to his new faith, he got into disrepute among the Spaniards and Indians, and at last was sent away in a coasting vessel.

Next year, while lying at Monte Rey, a note from one of the English Merchants apprised the Captain, that there was in the town a British subject in the most distressed state, covered from head to foot with scorbutic ulcers. Capt. Beechey immediately ordered a mate with a boat's crew to go, and if possible bring him off to the ship for medical aid; and if unfit to come, to give him present relief till the morrow.

I had charge of the boat, and hastened to aid a fellow creature in distress. The poor creature could walk, and that was all. He had not been long seated in the boat, when I overheard one man say to the other, "I say Jem, do you know who that is?" and on receiving an answer in the negative, "Then Jem," replied the other, "it's either Mathews or his ghost;" and it was indeed Mathews. The man who, one year before, was in all the bloom of health and strength, now the miserable being scarcely to be recognised, and suffering agonies. Poor fellow! he never completely recovered, and when in a state of convalescence, a time that it was supposed his desertion would have been punished, the captain so far felt for him, that he left his case as it stood, desiring him to do what he could about the deck. When the ship returned to England, Mathews received the sum of thirteen pounds two shillings, thus proving the correctness of the old proverb, that a "rolling stone gathers no moss."

I have often sat in my little cabin and taken a view of the past, and the great improvements that have taken place in my circumstances, as well as in the navy, since I first (through a kind interposition of Providence) joined it. This, to my brother tars, may seem strange, that I should feel thankful, for what I then thought of with the deepest agony of mind, but in this I am not singular, I have heard many others express the same sentiments of gratitude, and with reason.

Among the various changes introduced since the Peace, for the benefit of the seamen of the Royal Navy, there is not one that has been so useful, or tended to so much good, as the medal and gratuity money, given for long service and good conduct. If a medal of treble value, and three times the sum were given in any other cause, it would not be so gratifying to the old seaman; and the manner in which it is given (that has been neglected of late) makes it doubly pleasing. He is selected from among a large body of men, placed in front on the quarter deck, pointed at, and recommended to the younger branches of the naval tree, as a bright example to follow. The medal is then handed to him as a token of the approbation of those who are placed high over him, and endowed with more than kingly power. It seems a bond of amity between himself and his superiors, an assurance of friendship and protection; it goes beyond that, it gives to his children a claim on the service in which the father faithfully served.

When the *Melville* was paid off in 1837, among those men who, for long service and good conduct, were entitled to recommendation, was an old quarter master, who has already figured in these pages, John Drew, a man, who as a seaman, was invaluable; and although his time was up, his character good in every way, still he felt a doubt whether he was one of the selected. The anxiety on his mind was dreadful, until about an hour before the paying commenced; Drew was first called, and then three more, and ranked up on the quarter deck. After a moment's delay, Captain Douglas came out of the cabin with the medals in his hand, and then spoke to each in turn nearly as follows.

"John Drew" (methinks I see the worthy old tar take his hat off, and holding it in his left hand, keep smoothing down his hair with the other), "Here sir," answered D—.

“From your very good conduct not only in my ship, but the very good character I have received from other officers, I have recommended you to the notice of My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, who, upon my recommendation, have granted you a pension of thirty-one-pounds sixteen shillings per annum; and as a reward for your faithful services (as well as a proof to others, that good conduct never goes unrewarded), their Lordships send you a medal (presenting it), and fifteen pounds. Now men, under all circumstances, take care of your medals, continue the path you have hitherto trod, and may you live many years to enjoy your pension.” Drew would have spoken, but he could not. Capt. D. saw it, and walked away; and as Drew left the quarter deck, I saw the man who had faced the storms of the ocean for so many years unappalled, with the tear of gratitude in his eye.

“It was beyond the power of words to tell
The debt he owed, the gratitude he felt.”

I heard a gentleman once observe to a friend who was sitting by him in a waterman’s boat, that seamen in general were an unobservant and unthinking, and in many instances, ungrateful class of men. The person who uttered this was a perfect stranger to me, or I could have told him, yes, and convinced him too (if he were open to conviction), that taking them as a body, *no* people are so reflecting, or so grateful, as the seamen of England. I could have laid before him one instance of the grateful feelings of seamen that must have put him in good humour with the whole body.

I cannot recollect the date, but when the *Waterwitch*, of ten guns, came home from the coast of Africa, commanded by Lieutenant Austin, only five of her first ship’s company returned, and only nineteen white men were on board,

the remainder were kroomen. The fever, so common in that fatal climate, had made dreadful ravages among her little band; and during the time of their sufferings, her surgeon, Doctor Goodrich, had never for one moment neglected them. And when, himself suffering a severe attack, and incapable of walking, he caused himself to be carried from hammock to hammock, and there, as far as possible, administered to the temporal, and at times, spiritual wants of his suffering shipmates.

Conduct like this was not likely to be forgotten. No, it left an impression on the hearts of those who recovered, that nothing could erase.

On the morning on which the brig was to be paid off, Mr. G. was surprised to receive a request from the ship's company to see him on the quarter deck. Of course he complied, when he found all hands assembled. And on making his quarter deck bow, the oldest tar among the lot stepped forward, holding in his hand a highly finished mahogany box, and presenting it to Doctor Goodrich, said,

"Sir, our gratitude for your kind attention in the hour of pain and suffering, when, regardless of self, you watched over the sick and the dying, has induced this small remnant of the *Waterwitch's* company to beg your acceptance of this trifling memorial of their gratitude, and the sense they have of your kindness throughout your stay in the ship."

Mr. G. held out his hand, took the box, and merely said, "I did not expect this, but I'll see you before we part," and hastened down. After paying off, the hands were again sent aft, and Dr. Goodrich expressed to them how gratified he felt with their present, in a short but sensible speech, and thus it ended. The case contained a snuff box, value nearly twenty pounds, elegantly adorned, and an appropriate inscription. I was on board on duty at the time,

and witnessed the whole scene; and having myself been shipmate three years with Mr. Goodrich, felt proud of the circumstance.

I recollect another circumstance, which may also prove that seamen are grateful in some cases to a great degree. On my return from a discovery voyage in 1823, among other petty officers, was G. Poole, the captain of our foretop, an excellent seaman, with all its valuable *et cæteras*. The ship was paid off at Woolwich, and after paying off, several of us P. O.'s dined together. In the course of conversation, each was relating what he was about to do, where he was going, &c., when Poole said, "Well lads, I'll tell you where I am going, I am going to look out for an old woman, who before the ship sailed, gave me a supper, a bed, and a shilling to help me on my road; and now, as we're in the way of a yarn, I may as well tell you one."

"I had for two years been in the Admiral's tender at Portsmouth, but wanted to go to sea, and left her; got my pay, spent it foolishly, and had nothing left for it but to walk to London, and beg my way.

"I left Portsmouth with only fifteenpence in my pocket, and a small bag, containing a few clothes, the wreck of my former stock. About two miles on the road, I met an old shipmate, like myself, outward bound, who still possessed a few shillings. On relating my situation, and the voyage I was upon, he strongly advised me to return, and try to get my old berth in the *Sylph*. This I firmly refused. "Well then," said he, "you shall share my supper, and my bed," and for this purpose we entered the first public-house we saw on the road.

"It was a cold, rainy, and sleety night; I felt my situation just then very heavy; but I had brought it on myself. Early next day I left the house, and instead of going

directly to London went on towards Chichester, at which place I arrived about two in the afternoon, and went down towards the quay to have a look round me.

“At the end of the quay, a barge of about forty tons was lying, there were three men in her endeavouring to fit a purchase to raise the mast up, and ease it down on passing under the bridges; I looked on for sometime, until I saw plainly, they knew nothing about what was wanted, and looking round, said to a respectable farmer-like looking man, who stood by, they’ll never raise the spar that way.”

“Can you do it friend? I’ll give you five shillings, a good supper, and a bed if you do.” “Now lads, this was providential, one shilling of my fifteenpence gone, a dreary night before me, and no bed nor supper,—a rather dull prospect.

“I set to with a will, fitted the purchase, and at six, the mast went up and down easily. My employer took me to his house (a public house certainly), fulfilled his agreement to the letter, and very kindly offered me constant employment. There was also the bright eye of a handsome servant girl set upon me, but I left them; however, I must, if possible, see that lass again: but to go on.

“I now got upon the true London road. On the third day my feet were blistered with walking in bad shoes; I was very tired and hungry, and only one shilling left. I saw standing at the door of a respectable public house, a middle aged female, whose features pleased me beyond measure; I walked up to her, and said, ‘Ma’am, will you give me as much to eat and drink as you can afford for sixpence, for I’ve only one shilling to carry me to London?’ In this case I was not deceived by appearances; she looked kindly, and said, “Go into the tap, and I’ll send thee something, poor fellow.”

"I did as I was desired, and sat myself on a vacant seat, and did not wait long. In a few minutes, the mistress herself astonished me by placing before me a plate well filled with cold meat, some bread, and a full quart of home brewed ale; I ate and drank, and forgot my poverty for the time. When my meal was ended, I went to the bar, and tendered my only remaining shilling. The good woman took it from my hand, and placing a sixpence on the top of it, kindly returned it to me, saying, "Poor creature! that is but little to carry thee all the way to London." "Well," continued Poole, "the Bible says, that charity covers a multitude of sins, and if that is'n't charity, why then, I dont know where it is to be found."

"Dont be tired, lads, said Poole, I hav'nt half done," "Go on, go on, George," came from every mouth.

"Well then," continued he, "you may believe me I felt very thankful to the landlady, and left the house, and trudged on cheerfully for some hours, with my bundle on the end of a stick, which was thrown over my right shoulder. Sometimes I sung a bit of a ditty, but then my poverty came across me, and I knocked off. I suppose I had got on seven or eight miles, when a gentleman riding on a handsome black horse overtook me, and entered into conversation with me; first, about the weather, and then about myself. I candidly told him how I was situated, fully expecting to see his hand go into his pocket to give me something. In this, however, I was disappointed, for after a full half-hour's questioning, he told me that he must ride on, but that if I would leave that card (which he presented me) at a white house on the left-hand side of the road, I should find a friend. I walked on, and soon reached the spot, pulled the bell, and having presented the card to the servant who came, was ushered into the kitchen, where I was

regularly well treated. During my stay in the house, the same gentleman who had given me the card, came out, accompanied by his lady and child, and after a great many questions, gave me half-a-crown, and left me in the kitchen among the servants.

“Some of them questioned the propriety of sending me away so late in the evening; others objected to my remaining all night; but the old housekeeper soon settled the business, by saying in her broad Scotch accent, “Let him sleep over the coach-house,—*Poor fellow, he’s somebody’s bairn.*” “Sincerely thankful for the mercies of that day, I humbly thanked God before I went to my comfortable bed, and determined to be very steady and careful in future.”

“It was past nine next morning before I left the house, and when I did leave it, I had food for all day, and above five shillings in money; but I was still thirty miles from London, my feet terribly sore, and no cheap conveyance near. However, I walked on, and at six that evening had only eight miles to walk into the city, and fancied, that once there, I should be sure of immediate employment; but how I was disappointed, time will tell. I went into a small alehouse in a hamlet of, I think, not more than twelve houses, and asked the landlord if he could give me lodgings for the night.” “No, no,” replied the old man, in as surly a tone as I’d ever wish to hear, “no. Tailors and tramps get no lodgings here; thee may’st drink as much as thee likest, and that be all.” I took one pint of his ale, with the determination to go on. Night was fast setting in, when I saw at some distance, in the middle of a field, a large building, that I supposed a barn, and made my mind up to sleep there, provided I could gain an entrance. The trial was soon made, finding a shutter open, I was soon among the straw, and about to lay down, when a voice

sounded in my years, 'Who are you?' 'Only a friend,' said I, 'come to seek a night's lodging.' 'Who are you pray?' for I felt rather alarmed. It struck me, that the man before me, was possibly there for the purpose of setting fire to the barn, and that I might be implicated in the crime; and so certain did I feel of the truth of my opinion, that I felt myself tremble from head to foot, and was in a greater state of alarm than I had ever known myself to be in before. It did not continue long, for I observed the man carefully covering over a small square box with straw, as if to screen it from my sight; and was glad to find that my fellow lodger was one who was far more likely to be afraid of me, than I of him.

"All efforts at conversation proving useless, I dropped asleep, after having spoken but very few words, and the next evening entered London, that emporium of commerce, where all my hopes of a sea voyage had been centred.

"Here I found seamen so plentiful, that they were glad to get ships even for dangerous voyages, at thirty-five shillings per month. All the houses of charity were crowded at night; and Boatswain Smith's straw house was so full, that numbers were refused even the oatmeal supper allowed by the institution.

"It was then that I thought, oh, that I had never left the *Sylph*; but reflection came too late. Thus I spent a week from dock to dock without any prospect of employment, till one evening I met our late carpenter in the Commercial-road; the button seemed to me as a friend, and I addressed him, when he informed me, that the *Blossom*, fitting at Woolwich, wanted hands, and gave me a shilling. I got a lodging that night, and started for Woolwich next morning, but my feet were so blistered that I could hardly walk; and at four o'clock, raining and blowing heavy, I was still two miles from Woolwich.

"It was at this time that I met the worthy, the kind old woman I'm going in chase of this evening. Methinks I see her just now; she had on an old red cloak, a small yellow mug in her hand, containing yeast. The old girl observed my limping walk, and addressing me, said very kindly, "You seem very lame young man, where may you be going?"

"Aye, mother," replied I (for I was in great pain just then) "lame, and very poor, I'm going to look for a ship at Woolwich, but God knows whether I shall get one, or, having got it, whether I shall be fit to do my work." And thus we talked, walking on at the same time.

"On the right hand side of the road was a row of small cottages; to one of these the old woman directed her steps, telling me to follow her. In the doorway of the next cottage was standing a young woman with a babe in her arms, who, as the elderly dame approached, said to her, "Well, Aunty, who have you got with you?"

"A poor sailor in distress, Martha," replied the old dame, "and you know, we are commanded to assist the poor and the needy."

"Yes, yes, Aunty," continued Martha, "it's a pity but you had plenty of money; many a poor person would benefit by it." A sign of the old lady's hand called me inside, and I really felt surprised to see, in the humble cottage of a poor old woman, so much cleanliness, and everything so very neatly stowed away. It appeared to me, that although Aunty's dress was coarse and old, she was not exactly poor. Indeed, from what I learnt that evening, I found that she did not want the common necessities of life, and very frequently shared its comforts; for the family, in whose service she had grown old, did not neglect her, but her own

some one in Haslar Hospital, informing me, that there was a seaman on his death-bed who wished to see me.

I was then serving on board the *Excellent*, and found no difficulty in obtaining leave to go. On one side of 76 ward, on a bed, weak, and worn down, was laying my former friend and shipmate, George Poole. He was evidently fast hastening to the grave, nor should I have recognised the once fine young man in the being now before me. He, however, was perfectly sensible, feebly stretched out his hand to me, and told me, that he felt his end was very near, but that he felt no fear at its approach; that he had wished to see as many of his shipmates as possible, and me in particular. He could scarcely speak, but he managed to tell me, that he had no relations in the world, and that his pay was to go to old Mrs. Norris, and Mrs. N. I found out to be the old woman with a red cloak. Now, who will ever say that seamen are not grateful; some will possibly reply "that is one instance only." To persons so uncharitable I reply, that I could relate an immense number more, if my memory were taxed a little, and my book would contain them.

That evening Poole died, and the next morning, application was made by the landlord of one of those low and vile houses so very common in these towns, for the residue of his pay, on the plea of a debt due to him for board and lodging some years before. But on examining the effects of the deceased, among some old letters, was found a will, which after the usual, "Know all men by these presents, that I, *et cætera*," willed all, and every part of his wages, prize money, *et cætera*, to his dear and respected friend Susan Norris, heirs, executors; so that the old lady, with the tattered red cloak, got the whole of his wages, amounting to above sixty pounds. And while doing an act of charity to

a sailor in distress, she little dreamt that amid all the cares and sufferings of a discovery voyage, the youth not only remembered her kindness, but at a time when death seemed inevitable, when pain of body, and anxiety of mind rendered him almost unfit for reflection, at that moment, the prayer she had uttered at her fireside gave him comfort, and, as it proved, made an impression, which though it might for a time have laid dormant, yet was never totally forgot.

I have frequently heard it said of a bad son or a bad daughter, "Ah, they are beyond hope." But if children are trained as they should be in youth, they never are beyond hope. They may sink deep in vice; drink of the cup of wickedness almost to the dregs, and still the impressions of youth hang around them, and in many instances, sooner or later, again come into action, and bring them in useful members of society.

We also sometimes observe in our path of life, children who have been brought up within the cheerless walls of a parish workhouse, subject to every privation and neglect, and, as it were, swimming through a sea of trouble, arrive at last not only to a respectable rank in society, but to complete affluence. One instance now most powerfully strikes my memory. The person to whom I allude was my fellow apprentice. On the same day we commenced our seafaring career as apprentices, in a brig called the *Torr Abbey*, of Jersey; the only difference that existed between us was, that I had just left a first-rate boarding-school, and poor Henry Desvignolles (for such I must call him), had just left the poorhouse of the parish of St. Aubin. Of his family he knew but little. He had been there ever since he was four years old. Often while sitting on the windlass end during the night-watches, and talking over the scenes of our youth, have I heard him say, "Ah, boy Jack, you've

got a-home, you've got some one to care for you, and look out for you when the brig goes home; but for me, there is'n't one soul to think about;" and then, in reply to some childish question I might ask, he often said, "That I had a father is beyond a doubt; but who or what that father was, God only knows; I can, however, recollect the kind care and attention (of what I should now call a lovely woman) who, as she parted the hair on my forehead would gently kiss the spot, and pressing me to her bosom, sigh as if her very heart was bursting; then send me away to the school with a little basket containing a few slices of bread and butter for my dinner, and now and then a far-thing to buy gingerbread. Her's were cares that none but a mother, a fond affectionate mother, can bestow. But a fatal disorder was preying on her constitution, and soon—too soon,

‘I heard the bell tolled on her burial day,
And watched the men that bore her slow away
To the grave.’

“Young as I was, it was to me a moment of agony. There was nothing left, and as no one would be troubled with me, I was removed to the poorhouse, and left under the care of Mrs. Luce, the matron. And of all the curious old women I ever heard of, she certainly was the most curious. But amid all her whims, she had good, very good qualities.

“I recollect the old girl, the first evening that I went in, bringing me my evening meal. It was a mixture of very coarse oatmeal with water, and apparently shaded with a little milk, and although very hungry, I could not taste it, but burst into tears. The poor old girl did all she could to comfort me; promised me everything she could think of, but all was useless; and finding it so, put me to bed, where I soon cried myself to sleep.

“There are scenes in the life of man which time cannot obliterate ; and surely this is one of them. Thrown from a mother’s tender care into a poorhouse, among the old and the young, and all huddled together in one long room ; obliged to bear the tempers and caprices of persons rendered worse by old age, disease, and privation, it was long ere I could reconcile myself to the place. I fell away to nothing. I recollect that one day when passing in review before a gentleman named Nicholle, who often visited us, that he observed to the matron, ‘that poor little fellow won’t trouble you long ; he’s going fast :’ and, giving the old woman half-a-crown, added, ‘Be kind to him, old woman, be kind to him.’

“What a glow of delight did these words impart to my bosom. Yes, ‘Boy Jack,’ they were the only soothing words I had received since the death of my mother. It appeared to me that a weight was removed from my heart. I looked up at Mr. N. with a tear of gratitude in my eye, which he observed, and putting his hand on my close cut head, said, ‘Be a good boy, and we’ll make a man of you yet.’

“This was a new day in my life. Mr. N. kept his word, and never lost sight of me. On the days on which he was expected to visit the house, I used to station myself at the corner of the street to wait his appearance, and then run to meet him, and by all the childish gambols I could use, express the delight I felt at seeing him. After a minute survey of the house, inspection of the food, &c., he generally left us, but never without leaving to each of the children a halfpenny, or sometimes a penny ; and thus passed three years of my life. I was then seven years old, and being a stout boy for my age, Mr. N. thought that I might be made useful in his house.

“Accordingly I was removed from the poorhouse to the kitchen, and dressed in a suit rather above that to which I had of late been used. Among the servants was a man named Nicolas Giard, one of the French refugees, who acted as a sort of footman, coachman, and at times drove a cart to and from the piers when vessels were discharging. This man appeared to possess the unbounded confidence of his master, and had access to almost every part of the house.

“To that man, ‘boy Jack,’ I owe the most miserable hours of my life, and afterwards the friendship and support of our kind master.

“Although only four years old when I entered the walls of the poorhouse, yet I recollected the care and attention with which my mother endeavoured to instil into my mind the principles of religion and honesty; often standing before her with my white pinafore and a leather belt, have I been made to repeat my catechism, and on coming to any of the commandments, she would impress them on my mind, and explain to me, that if I served God, and walked in his ways, however poor or low I might be, he never would forsake me.

“At the death of the best, the tenderest of mothers, these impressions, instead of fading away, seemed to increase; and although within the close confines of a workhouse, it oftentimes appeared as if I conversed with her; and while saying to myself the prayers she had taught me, every sorrow vanished; for, young as I was, I felt that I was acting up to her wishes.

“With a foundation so well laid, it is no wonder that I shuddered at an act of dishonesty; and it was not long before I found that the man Giard practised it in an immense degree, and not satisfied with doing so himself, wished me to assist him in robbing his master; a master to whom he ought to have been bound by ties of gratitude and respect.

"Our master, as you know, was then as now, largely engaged in the wine trade. One part of Giard's duty was to superintend the bottling, and to stow it away in the bins when bottled. I was frequently employed about the cellars, and at times entrusted to carry the bottles towards the bin into which they were to be deposited, and always observed that a certain number of bottles were put away in some corner where no one was likely to notice them. Young as I was, it struck me that all was not right, and a very short time convinced me that my suspicions were just; for one evening, a little after dark, when our master was out, Giard gave me a covered basket, and desired me, with the same tone of authority he always used with me, to carry it to the house of a woman whose means, I well knew, did not admit of purchasing wine. I however carried the basket, and at the door of the house met the woman, who appeared to expect me, and on my giving her the basket, she gave me a few coppers, and asked if Giard intended to send anything more that night, and thus we parted.

"For nearly a whole week I was thus employed every evening, and although I felt I was doing wrong, yet fear kept me silent. I well knew that our master ought to be acquainted with the conduct of his supposed confidential servant; but how to bring it about was to me a source of great anxiety.

"Several weeks passed away, and wine still going, when one morning I was ordered into the parlour, where Mr. and Mrs. N. were sitting at breakfast, and from the way in which the servant spoke to me, I felt that something was amiss, particularly when I heard her say to another servant, 'This comes of taking people's brats out of the workhouse. I'm sure he's the thief.'

“‘Oh, dont say so, Susan,’ replied the other, ‘I dont believe it; for a dishonest boy would never say his prayers night and morning as he does.’

“On entering the breakfast parlour, Mr. N. fixed his eyes firmly on me, and then said, ‘Henri, I am grieved to think you dishonest; but something very valuable has been lost out of my office—only you and Nicholas ever go there—and as I’ve known him a long time, and found him honest, and further, he declares that he has not seen the inside of the office these last ten days, I of course must suspect you. Now tell me, and tell me truly, have you taken any money from my desk?’

“No, Sir, oh no, Sir, never did I see it, cried I,” falling on my knees, “I never stole a farthing in my life!”

“Giard was then called in, who still affirmed that he had not been in the office, and added, that for some time past, he had noticed that I spent money in buying a slate, and several small books: this to our master appeared conclusive. I was repeatedly asked, where I had stowed the money, I denied all knowledge of it, which so irritated Mr. N., that he said, ‘Go, wretched boy, go to the dark hole I took you from; go, and join companions more suitable to your pursuits, and never let me see you again, I was indeed deceived in your looks.’

“Mrs. N. endeavoured to interfere, but the well known ‘silence, Mary,’ checked her tongue; and I was led by the hand to the door of the poorhouse, and rudely pushed inside.

“Oh! may I never see such a day as that again, continued poor Henri, while the big tears chased each other down his cheeks, and I cried for company. Everybody shunned me; even the children were afraid to speak to me. It was then, in the moment of bitter anguish, that I found

out that old Mrs. Luce was possessed of a heart endowed with the warmest affections of our nature; she too, poor old soul, thought me guilty, and urged me to tell where I had put the money (for no one said that I had made away with it), and pointed out to me the base ingratitude with which I had acted to the very best of masters. It was in vain I said, I had never touched or ever seen it: nothing could have convinced her to the contrary, but for the following circumstance that occurred some time after.

"The misery I felt in the day acted so powerfully on my mind, that even in the deepest sleep I spoke almost constantly, and always on the same subject; and when suddenly awake, my first words were, 'oh, the money! the money!—no doubt Giard sent it with the wine.'

"From what she heard, she felt assured that I was innocent of taking it, and anxious to do me justice, went herself to the office, and in a long conversation with Mr. N., very nearly convinced him that I not only was guiltless, but that his favorite man was guilty of this and many other robberies of wine and cordials.

"In the afternoon I again entered the house, accompanied by the good old matron, who seemed quite determined not to leave anything undone to prove me innocent.

"Mr. N. was sitting at his desk when I went in, and said, 'Well, Henri' (oh, how soothing the sound of Henri), 'I've again sent for you to know all about the money.—First then, did you ever carry any wine to ——?'

"Yes, Sir, four times." 'And who gave it you to carry there?' 'Nicholas, sir.'

"How much was there each time, and was I at home when you took it there?'

"Sometimes there was six bottles, sometimes nine; but you were always in town when it was carried, and the

woman met me at the door, took the basket, and sometimes gave me a penny, and I returned home.'

" 'Did you ever carry anything else to that house?'

" 'Yes, Sir, about a week before I went back to Mrs. Luce, I was sent by Nicholas with something heavy, tied up in a blue handkerchief; there was a hole in the handkerchief, and I saw some yellow paper round it. Nicholas told me that it was a parcel of nails he had brought from town.'

" 'Nails! nails indeed!' exclaimed Mr. Nicholle, 'it strikes me they were valuable nails.'

" Mr. N. now pulled the bell, and ordered Nicholas to be called, and sent in immediately. I was just going out to call him, for a ray of hope shot across my mind, that I should be found innocent, when Mr. Nicholle roared out at the very top of his voice, 'stand fast, sir,' and made me tremble again.

" 'Presently in walked Nicholas, with all the air of a French dancing master, merely supposing he was wanted to receive his orders for town, but one glance from Mr. N. convinced him all was not right.

" 'Pray, Mr. Giard,' began Mr. Nicholle, 'what parcel of nails was that you brought from town about three weeks ago, and sent by this little boy to a female, whom it appears, you also occasionally supply with wine?'

" 'I think, 'boy Jack,' that no painter in the world could have described that man's look. I've heard the chief-mate talk of a dying dolphin, but I suppose it resembled that, for it became of all sorts of colours.

" 'I dont remember ever sending any parcels of nails, or wine either,' said Giard, but in such a tone as fully convinced our good master that he was not only guilty of the crime, but had fully doubled it by endeavouring to throw it on a poor helpless boy. A very short time ended the

business ; a search was made, but before it was half over, Nicholas acknowledged all : most of the money was found, and he was sent adrift, never to be seen near the house.

“ Oh how I cried when Mr. Nicholle rose from his chair, and taking my hand said, ‘ That scoundrel had very nearly ruined you, my poor boy ; but I do feel thankful he did not succeed. Now, then, what can I do for you ? Would you like to go to sea ? If so, I will have you apprenticed in the *Torr Abbey* ; and if you continue in the path of integrity, I will be your friend so long as I live.’ ”

“ I was delighted with the idea of going to sea. You know the rest. We both commenced our seafaring life—you under the care of kind parents, and myself under the care of Mr. Nicholle ; my outfit was liberal, and as yet we both seem comfortable.”

Thus far Henri had gone on : I must now continue, and point out to my brother seamen the wide difference that took place in our tracks. For seven long years we were fellow-servants. Mine was only a nominal apprenticeship, for every winter I remained in Newfoundland, and had many opportunities of getting forward, which I neglected. In the summer we always sailed together ; were pleased to meet and loath to part. There was something so sweet, so diffident, in his temper, so willing to oblige, that Henri Desvignolles had the respect and hearty good wishes of all.

Long before the end of his time he was chief mate ; and although still apprenticed, he got the full pay, which was liberal in the extreme ; for the firm of Winter, Nicholle and Co. always allowed one pound a month more to their chief mates than the current port wages, observing that it was never lost, and kept them alive to the interests of the owners.

Early in the year 1808 we parted ; I to go chief mate in other employ, and Henri to go chief mate in a beautiful

brig just purchased, and named the *Venus*. For years we neither saw or heard of each other.

In 1816 I went to Jersey ; misfortunes (some brought on by myself, the greater part by others), had reduced me almost to despair. The heavy hand of sorrow was upon me, and I could scarcely look round upon a single friend. When walking from the piers one morning towards St. Heliers, I observed a very genteel looking man stop and look at me with fixed attention, and after a moment's gaze exclaim, "Is it possible ! or do I dream ? Is this my old fellow apprentice ?"

"It is indeed," I replied, "all that sorrow and care has spared of him." Mutual explanations took place ; and at his earnest desire I dined with him ; and beheld in the respectable master mariner, the vast and favourable change a few short years had made. He was not like a drum, more noise than substance. Everything around him bespoke the comforts of a happy home. At that time he commanded the *Venus*, and, privileged by his owners and late masters, he had been allowed to purchase one-fourth of the vessel. Still, amid his prosperity, there was none of that pride so often met with ; and while I weighed in my mind the difference in our prospects past and present, I could not but acknowledge the justice of Providence in showering blessings on a man so worthy, and so humble. Since that period I have seen him but once ; then no longer a master mariner, but a highly respectable merchant and ship-owner, and surrounded by an amiable family.

CHAPTER VI.

" No more the seaman calls the depth,
Which to each anxious heart gives glad'ning thought,
And told that home was near. The night is come ;
While o'er the moonlit waves the vessel glides
In silent majesty, far from that land
To which is bound by every tie
The world can give of hope, or human bliss."

How often do we find, in our way through life, that our heaviest afflictions prove blessings in disguise. At the time in which I closed my last chapter, I had left a vessel in which I had gone to Rio Janeiro as chief mate ; the master had died after a few days' sail on our way home, and I had of course taken the command, and safely brought her home, in full expectation of retaining it. It proved otherwise. A distant relation of the owners was placed in her as master, and I was offered the chief mate's situation ; this I angrily, perhaps impertinently, refused.

In a few days I saw her going out of harbour, under the charge of a youth, a mere boy to me, who was but young

myself. I can scarce describe what I felt as she passed the pier heads, and as I looked down upon her deck, I wished myself anything or anywhere. My grief made me seriously ill, and it was long ere I recovered my former health and spirits. I could in no way reflect on myself, for I felt that in the discharge of my duty to my employer, I had been almost beyond the mark, for their interest had been as my own. I however recovered, and after a short voyage or two in different grades, and many fruitless efforts to get employment in any way above a foremast man, I sought refuge in a man-of-war, in hopes there to find that support and comfort I had in vain sought for everywhere else; nor was I disappointed. The new mode of life I had to adopt, the various, and (to me) strange duties I had to perform, entirely banished from my memory the vessel I had so strongly hoped to command, until I met by accident a woman, whom I had known as the wife of one of the seamen who had gone out in her, and she, poor thing, wore the sable garb of a widow. A short conversation soon made me acquainted that the *Amazon* sailed, but since that, no intelligence had been received, beyond a vessel's having picked up part of a boat, with *Amazon*, of Guernsey, painted on her stern. It was only after nearly four years of intense anxiety, that all hopes of the surviving friends were given up, when they took to mourning.

The sight of this poor widow, while it grieved me for her forlorn and unprotected state, yet it filled my heart with gratitude, that by one of those events at which I was repining, I was mercifully preserved from sharing the fate of her devoted crew. Well indeed may we say, the ways of Providence are inscrutable.

There is among the numerous rocks on which seamen generally strike, when on shore (and out of a ship), one,

against which I would more particularly warn them, I mean smuggling. A band of these men are always ready to receive the daring, reckless seaman, and if possible, make him a stepping-stone by which they land their cargoes.

I recollect one instance of this kind by which two valuable lives were lost, and two good men taken from the service of their country.

I was at the time stationed under Captain Mingaye, on the coast blockade, for the purpose of looking out for smugglers, and attached as quarter-master to the *Griper*, at the mouth of Chichester harbour.

One evening, in the fall of 1829, I left the *Griper* in an eight-oared galley, and pulled outside, and then laying her head to the eastward, kept Chichester harbour open to my view, and at the same time saw well into the offing. The men were laying on their oars, with their eyes directed all ways; nothing hove in sight till about 10.30, when the bowman said he could see something in the offing. "Give way lads." Give way was scarcely uttered from my lips, when the boat flew over the light waves, sending the spray over the boat's crew; "give way and wet the bowman" was oft the cheering word.

Half-an-hour's pull enabled us to make the craft out a small vessel, with three masts, and almost beyond doubt a smuggler. As near as I could judge, she was beating up to land her cargo to the eastward of Selsea Bill.

At the time we first caught a glimpse of her, the wind was light, but freshening gradually, and promising to blow fresh, giving me a good warning not to go too far from the land; I however determined to board her at all risks.

The men gave way beautifully; the boat was of a light blue colour, much resembling the waves, so that she was within a quarter of a mile before she was seen by the

benevolence kept her pocket empty. The young woman, who addressed her as Aunt, was her niece, as well as her neighbour.

“On the table was lying a large bible, which from appearances she had been reading just before she went out for the yeast with which I met her, for between the leaves, her spectacles were put as a mark: there were also many other marks, and from its look, I judged that it was not neglected. It seems to give me pleasure, even now, to think of the kindness of the dear old body, the first act of whom was to get me warm water to bathe my feet; they were far worse than I thought, but the warm water soothed my pain; she then rubbed them with ointment, and after this was done, a comfortable cup of tea with bread and butter, quite as much as I could make use of.

“Her next care was to prepare a bed for me; there was but one in the house, but cloaks, a blanket, and a pillow laid on the floor, made me very comfortable. About eight at night, the old girl informed me, that it was her custom to go to bed early, but that she never did so, without committing herself unto the kind care of her Maker; ‘then,’ added she, ‘come life, come death, we are ready.’

“The large bible was opened, a chapter read with attention (it was the 53rd chapter of Isaiah), and then a very appropriate prayer ended the evening. Oh! lads, methinks I see her at this moment, kneeling and imploring blessings on the seamen of our country; never can I forget her, or while I live, part with her shilling. But the prayer sunk deep in my mind; and while poor old Dines and myself were lashed ten hours to the barge’s masthead in Kotzebue Sound, and the almost frozen waves washing frequently over us, that prayer seemed to cheer me; and there, as it were, out of the world, and in a perishing state, I as nearly

as I could repeated the old woman's prayer, and God spared our lives. It was then that I commenced to think seriously, and it was then that I determined, if possible, to lead a steady life: but let me carry on.

"Next morning, I was up early, and after a good wash, my feet being much better, I was ready for the short distance I had to go. Very soon after, the old lady appeared, gave me a large piece of bread and cheese, and a shilling ' (there's the same shilling lads,' said Poole, taking it out of the corner of his handkerchief, 'there it is as black as it can well be, but I must want a shilling badly before I spend this). ' I tried to thank the old lady, but found I had lost the use of my tongue, and felt a tear rolling down my cheek. She saw what I felt, and said, 'Go on, young man, go on, and may the God of Jacob go with thee.'

"It was noon ere I reached Woolwich, when walking down to the lower watergate, I met Captain Beechey; I did not know him then, but he spoke to me, and asked if I wanted a ship. I replied, 'yes, sir, very much indeed;' a short conversation ensued, when Capt. B. gave me a card to deliver to Mr. Peard, and a half-a-crown, telling me if I knew any more such fellows to bring them to him. Two days after, when the captain mustered the ship's company, I found myself rated captain of the fore-top. I was paid off with above seventy pounds, and please God, I hope to share it with the old girl with the red cloak. Now lads, my yarn is over; we'll drink her health, and after sharing toils and difficulties not often met with, we'll part sober, and thankful that we are again on English ground."

That evening, accompanied by my wife, I was on my way to London, and within a few days, joined another ship.

Time, the cradle of our hopes, and the grave of our existence passed on, till 1837, when I received a note from

lugger, and by this time she had quite as much wind as she could carry her sail to, and made short tacks to baffle me. During the chase I fired a number of muskets at her, of which the crew took no notice. About two o'clock I was well up to her, and considered myself sure of my prize; and almost calculated the amount of money likely to come in from my night's work; but, alas! my hopes were frail. A heavy squall came on, and carry on through all they must, or surrender. They carried on until overcome with the weight of her canvas. The ill-fated lugger went on her broadside, filled, and sunk, leaving in her vortex a number of tubs and bales.

In the anxiety of the moment every thing was forgot but the lives of the crew; for never did I see men pull with more strength than did my boat's crew to gain the spot where the vessel had disappeared; but of her crew of five, only two were picked up, and one of the two was nearly gone. When all hopes were lost of saving the three remaining men, I turned my attention to the cargo; 92 tubs of contraband spirits were picked up, and 13 bales of tobacco; the rest we saw nothing of: the wind and swell by this time had so much increased, that I found it necessary to beach, and haul the boat up near Selsea, and remain there at least till daylight.

Daylight came, but the weather was even worse; and to launch a boat would have been madness. Ranging along the beach east and west, several tubs of spirits were picked up, and one of the dead bodies. Several of the men from the village of Selsea recognised him immediately as T. E. Whyte, a young man who, only a few months before, had formed a part of our ship's company, and stationed at the very watch-house, and nearly at whose door his dead body was washed up.

Whyte was as fine a young man as was borne on the *Hyperion's* books. His exertions had got him second class petty officer, when he was sent to Selsea as a confidential man, and there he still retained his superior character ; so much so, that he was permitted to go to the village at all times, under the guise of making small purchases, but in reality to gain information relative to the movements of those smugglers that did not belong to the place ; for it was a maxim with them to sacrifice any other gang to save themselves, or to favour the landing a cargo.

There was, at the entrance of the village from the beach, a small row of cottages, seven in number, in one of which the fisherman (*alias* the smuggler) resided. These cottages presented the very look of comfort and cleanliness. In the middle one of the seven lived an aged widow, whose only daughter had, about three years before, been married to J. Venus, one of the most daring of the Selsea gang. He too, had lost his life in attempting to land.

Whyte, as before said, was a privileged man. Although against Capt. M.'s orders for any of his men to visit the villages or public-houses, yet so depended upon by the lieutenant on his station, that he could at any time walk direct to the village and return without fault being found. This, in some cases, favoured the revenue, and assisted the officers' pockets, for he seldom went without bringing back some valuable information.

The old widow kept what was called a *speak easy shop* ; or in other words, sold, or rather gave away, beer and brandy to any one who called at her house and made her a present of the full value of what they drank. She thus avoided duty on the spirits, and a license for her house.

After the death of Venus, Whyte frequently called for his glass, as well to pick up information, as to see the

lovely young widow ; and she was indeed, a lovely woman. Tall, with an elegant shape, and light flaxen hair curling down over her shoulders, and possessing a passable education, she was every thing likely to attract the affections.

Day after day Whyte went up and spent all the time he could spare, and sometimes more than he ought, until the busy tongue of scandal reached the ears of his officer, who, sending for him, taxed him with deceit. Poor W. fully acknowledged his affection, and requested Lieut. Carr to apply to Capt. M. for permission to marry.

The reply from the captain was a decided negative, and a promise that should he marry contrary to approbation, the wife should never enter the watch-house, nor should he be permitted to visit her. To make assurance doubly sure, an order was sent to remove him to the most distant station from Selsea, with only two hours' notice.

Short as the period was for preparation to leave a spot rendered dear to him, it was not so short but an interview was managed, their plans formed, and Whyte left apparently without a struggle.

For some weeks he remained at his new station without shewing any uneasiness, did his duty attentively, and succeeded in taking a man, and nineteen tubs of spirits.

At last the postman brought a letter with an immense black seal, announcing to Whyte the death of his mother, and requesting him, if possible, to attend the funeral. The letter was shown to the officer, by him forwarded to Capt. Mingaye, and returned with the usual mark in red ink outside, "Approved, five days' leave, W. J. M."

Within half-an-hour of the arrival of the answer, W. was out of the watch-house ; but it was remarked by his friends, first, that he did not display those tokens of grief usual on the death of a mother ; and secondly, that he took the road

westward in lieu of east. It was shrewdly suspected therefore, that the funeral would turn out a wedding.

The five days soon passed, and exact to his time Whyte returned to the watch-house, but accompanied by a female, and that female was the late widow Venus. He himself was kindly received; the officer who really valued him, observed, that he had done a bad job for himself, and desired him to see his wife settled, and return time enough to keep the first watch.

When the information was conveyed to Capt M., he was at first in a terrible rage to find himself thus outwitted, but finding by the books that Whyte's period of five years' service was nearly expired, and anxious to retain him, Capt. M., as near as possible passed it over, merely issuing orders not to admit Mrs. W. to the watch-house, and to a man in like circumstances, and of a like disposition, that was severe enough.

The day his five years expired, W. applied to be discharged. Every effort to get him back failed, and he left the watch-house, telling his messmates that he hoped they would not often see him, yet he thought they would frequently hear of him. On leaving the place, he settled at Selsea, and very soon became one of the most noted of the gang; for well acquainted with the rules of the blockade, its customs and manners, he could with ease act upon them, and succeeded in landing cargoes when all others failed.

To relate the various means resorted to by this man to decoy the men off their stations would fill a volume, suffice it to say, that he seldom failed of success. Twice he tried it with me, and once I was so far off my guard, that I went westward, when I should have remained exactly where I was; and in the mean time 40 tubs of spirits were carried quietly up the beach.

Such was the man who now lay before me a ghastly corpse, disfigured almost beyond knowledge, and myself almost the principal cause of his death ; and still worse, it fell to me to carry the painful news to his home, to those who loved him beyond measure.

Ordered by the lieutenant of Selsea watch - house, I walked towards the village, and entered the house with a feeling of agony I cannot describe. Poor creature ! the widow herself was the first person I encountered ; she plainly saw I had some painful news to communicate.

“Speak, oh, speak, for Heaven’s sake ! keep me not in suspense. Tell me, is he alive ? Edward, my Edward, is he alive ?” My look spoke sufficiently ; my lips were closed.

One long, loud piercing shriek, and had I not received herself and babe in my arms, she would have fallen on the fender. People immediately flocked in from the neighbouring cottages, while I walked painfully away from the scene of mourning.

Let a man be ever so honest, the account of his own conduct will always be favorable ; but in this case, I certainly condemned myself almost too much ; and surely, the fate of this young man should be a warning to others to avoid the fatal rock on which so many have already ran. ’Tis want of money. Alas ! how easy are our scruples removed when we want money ; how many are there, who when in a state of prosperity and affluence, when not tried by temptation, would have blushed at the bare idea of a dishonest action, have raised, and held up their hands in abhorrence when they have heard of others being found guilty ; and yet when in adversity, have themselves committed the very acts they before so loudly condemned.

Let us therefore be charitable, and while we acknowledge the error to be great, let us feel sorrow and pity rather than indignation, and pray that we may be kept from the temptation.

CONCLUSION.

My travels are now ended; and from this point of rest I venture to look back upon the vicissitudes of my career with, I trust, an acknowledging spirit, and a heart equally affected by gratitude and respect to my superiors, and wonder at the blessings I have enjoyed. I may now call myself at home.

The mixed feelings of anxiety, hope, and fear, with which the traveller who has been long absent from his home returns to it at last, can hardly be understood by those who have never passed the shores of their birth-place, but nursed in luxury and ease, have always lived amidst familiar scenes of unvarying and habitual repose.

The excitement can scarcely be described, when (as it were) floating into the tranquil river of our homes, we leave the vast expanse behind, and are met by sounds of rejoicing and welcome. We drop our anchor. This brings to my mind those beautiful lines of Lord Byron—

“’Tis sweet to hear the honest watch-dog’s bark
Bay deep-mouth’d welcome as we draw near home;
’Tis sweet to know there is an eye will mark
Our coming, and look brighter when we come.”

If these pages are productive of no other benefit than that of proving to the Seamen of England how much may be done by attendance to duty and cheerful obedience to orders—how much hope exists, even in the most trying

hours, and how many resources against loneliness and discontent a well-regulated ship offers, I shall be content, and hope that my books have not been altogether destitute of utility.

In the remotest places, where civilisation has sprung up as a lovely flower—in the barren soil even of Kamschatka—among strangers, speaking unknown tongues, and governed by foreign usages—an alien in aspect and associations, I have been kindly treated; friends have appeared where I could least hope to find them.

I can say, and with pleasure, that in the course of my naval service, I have been placed under officers whose conduct had been held up to me as tyrannical and oppressive, and yet with these I passed years in arduous toil in distant climes, and have been treated with confidence and respect.

Like all who look back, I see how much better I could have done. I regret many an opportunity of doing good that will never occur again, and cannot part with my readers without emotion. The kind favor with which the Old Quarter Master has been received, its acceptance in the highest naval ranks, its adoption in the naval libraries, and the generous allowance that has been made for the circumstances under which it was produced, and the consideration extended to it from quarters to which I cannot turn without pride and gratitude, will excuse the expression of feelings that may transfer the reader of the book to its author.

I now repose from my toils, and review the past, as an ordeal, of which the difficulties are forgotten, and the pleasures alone remembered.

H. M. S. *Excellent*, October 21st, 1844.

JOHN BECHERVAISE.

